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SHADOWS OF LONDON LIFE.

HOME.

THERE may be some to whom the name of London conveys the idea only of the profusion of gaiety and the splendours of wealth; who, though in words they may sometimes allow the presence of much misery and poverty, think of the latter only in the light that the unfortunate Marie-Antoinette viewed it, when she asked why, if the poor could not get bread, they did not rather live on cheesecakes than starve?—They do not realise to themselves that distress which crowds its streets with squalid wretchedness, more or less carelessly displayed; and many, many of its dwellings with hopeless and contentious misery, varied by reckless bursts of false gaiety, that sometimes glare on the path of poverty, as on that of vice; or the dejected efforts for mere subsistence by the honestly labouring; or, more sad still, the lingering sickness, aided in its attacks by a despair that sees in the grave nothing but rest, unprovided with those means that wealth might employ to alleviate it, too often uncheered by affection and sympathy,—for, alas! both will sometimes perish beneath the blighting influence of self, fostered into giant power by the perpetual unsatisfied cravings of animal life.

There is, in the neighbourhood of a large square—the residence of wealth, if not of fashion—a street, (no matter for its name,) a short, quiet street of small houses; a grocer's, a baker's, and a poulterer's shop occur at intervals; and at one end is a tavern, of some pretensions, but less brightly coloured than many of the brethren of its order; a circulating library, elaborately named, urges for it some literary claims in the possession of about a hundred old romances, and its windows, ornamented with various prints, displaying Kean or Yates *rampant* or Taglioni *dansant*, are the daily admiration and wonder of a flock of "young ideas" (to misuse Thomson's phrase) issuing with much clamour from the commercial academy next door: but, except those named, the remaining are private residences, and one of these is the dwelling I would individualise. It was a neat, but somewhat dingy-looking house, from the want of paint and of those other attentions the externals of a house require, to give it an air commonly called respectable; the Venetian blinds, which, except a flimsy muslin curtain hung across, were the only ornaments of the windows, were also faded and shabby; the door-plate, on which Mr. George Barr was declared "Accountant," was as bright as could be expected from a weekly polishing; and the door-steps, though not so white as some in the same street, were at least swept clean. The lower front room was appropriated for the desk of the accountant; in the upper (which, after the modern fashion, was ostentatiously divided into two by folding-doors,) were seated his wife and three daughters. But for a minute I must leave these, while I describe the apartment.

Among those neither indolently resigned to fashion nor subjected by necessity (if such there are), much of the character of the dwellers might be read in the arrangements of the dwelling; but, except in the flowers scattered over the room, necessity had been

here the dictator, and even in the choice of these her iron rule had been made apparent; a carpet very much worn, but carefully mended; an old-fashioned sofa, which served the only son as a bed; a few cane-chairs; a round table in the centre of the room, and a Pembroke one at the side, on which stood a handsome desk, the only relic of better times now remaining,—except that the chimney-piece yet boasted a looking-glass, with a tarnished frame, in whose plate had been reflected the bridal smiles of the now pale and grave mother, and her children's infant glee or vacant astonishment at its wonders; these, with hand-screens, the production of school-industry, and a pair of vases for flowers, the cheap purchase of a day of comparative plenty, formed the whole furniture of the apartment of those who now sat within it. The mother, with an emaciated form and haggard countenance, yet retained that impress more lasting than beauty, the effect of a well-governed mind and a gentle temper; her eyes, once large and bright, were shrunk with time and sorrow, and the spectacles she wore could not hide their anxious and wandering expression; her dress was faded and carelessly worn, but nothing could obliterate the true characteristics of that often misapplied title—the lady. The daughters, in faded dresses, that had been many times altered to suit the changing fashion, were now occupied in considering how some muslin ones might be made available for a party to which they had been invited. Two of them were actively engaged in this endeavour; the third had thrown herself on the sofa, to consider more at her ease, as she playfully said, by what tasteful contrivance an unfortunate rent might be remedied or concealed. Her sisters pursued their work in silence; and she, though ten minutes had passed since she spoke, was still lying there, when her mother, turning towards her, perceived a languor in her countenance and a cloud in her eyes, so opposed to the tone of her previous observation as to attract her anxious notice.

"Ellen, dear!" she said, removing her spectacles, whose dimmed glasses at that moment interrupted her eye-sight, "you are not well—what ails you?"

"Oh, nothing, mama," said Ellen, springing from the sofa; "I was deep in thought, and, at the moment you spoke, was wondering what Mr. Macready would say to my tragedy, and figuring to myself all the ridiculous lights in which its violent bursts might be placed. But I will torment myself about it no more: he may accept it; and then, dear mama, if I could get, suppose one hundred pounds for it, how happy it would make us!—how happy I should be to put all of it into your hands."

"But, Ellen," interrupted her elder sister, "I think mama is right; you certainly are not well. I am afraid you worry yourself with anxiety about these things."

"Oh, no, Clara," said Ellen, gaily, "I do not place all on this cast. If it fails, I will just try again: a fall would, I think, only give me new strength, like Antæus."

"To paraphrase the physician's compliment to his patient, you deserve to be disappointed," said her other sister; but more gravely added, "I wish you would confess what is the matter; for, I am sure, the last few days you have been far from well."

"You are right, Anne," resumed the mother; "I fear," and her voice trembled, "that you have not sufficient nourishing food." And the mother turned her head away, and wept.

"Nay, dear mama, don't fancy such things," said Ellen, drawing a chair to her mother's side, and taking one of her hands in both hers. "You know," she added, trying to speak gaily, "Dr. B. says, that more die from over-eating than from over-drinking. I don't think temperance ever harmed any one; and if we did dine on bread to-day, papa will receive some money next week, and who knows how soon I may be able to give you some. So come, cheer up, and hope;—you are not tired of hope yet, mama."

"Bless you, my child!" was the mother's sighing reply: and Clara, to turn the conversation, called Ellen to counsel on their work.

"Is it necessary, mamma," said Ellen, when they had, after many appeals to their mother, decided on a plan of operations, "is it absolutely necessary that we should go to this place? Might we not excuse ourselves? I shall grudge the expense, though it is so trifling."

"It is necessary for your father's interest to cultivate the acquaintance," was the reply.

"And the Carters," observed Anne, "would be more likely to be offended if we did not go, because they depend very much upon you and Clara for music and that sort of thing, as they call it. I wish your singing could convert them into ladies and gentlemen; it would be a greater miracle than the power of Orpheus over trees and stones."

"Nay, why so harsh upon them, Anne?" said Clara.

"Oh!" replied Anne, with a quick glance at her mother, "because it is my pleasure to dislike them exceedingly."

"But I see no reason for it," urged Clara.

Ellen bit her lip, and by a look stayed her sister's reply.

The Carters were a family endowed with many good qualities, but, not aware of the pecuniary distress the Barrs were suffering, and having no key to its discovery in a similar experience, were apt to consider that meanness, which was poverty; to think that pride, which was an anxious jealousy of the respect they feared might be denied to it; they had no toleration for their occasional nervous irritability, the consequence of actual want of food; and they did not spare, by hint or innuendo, to reflect, sometimes sarcastically, sometimes playfully, on these their imagined defects; and (which was, perhaps, a cause of dissonance more constantly in action,) the Carters, reared in the sunshine of prosperity, could not reciprocate or understand the acuteness of feelings, refined, softened, and quickened by trial and adversity.

While the mother and her daughters were endeavouring to beguile each other's anxiety, by covering their own with an assumed gaiety, the father and son pursued their unproductive avocations in the room below. A thoughtful silence was broken by the determined rap of the postman: it seemed to startle both, and to add a new shade of anxiety to the countenance of each. The son went to the door, and in a minute returned with four letters.

"You must tell him I'll give it him next time—I have no change now," said Mr. Barr, in answer to his son's silent intimation.

The man went away grumbling, (they had not been able to afford him a Christmas-box,) and the son, with a flushed countenance and dejected eye, again sat down to the desk, while the father opened the letters. Three of them he read; then, pushing them towards his son, he leaned his head on his hand, in an attitude of thoughtful despondency, watching his countenance while he read them. The first two were twopenny missives from the butcher and baker, requesting, in no very courteous style, the immediate payment of their separate small accounts; with a hint, that people who bore such a respectable appearance might, if they pleased, pay their debts, and should do so if they wished to keep their character; with a threat that, unless it was done immedi-

ately, proceedings would be commenced against them. The cheeks of the younger Barr varied from red to pale as he perused these, but his eye flashed indignantly. He took up the third letter; it was from a lawyer, who bore a character for great acuteness and ingenuity: it merely requested to know whether Mr. Barr had decided to undertake the commission he had previously named to him. After reading this last, he looked at his father with a questioning expression.

"You have a right to know and to judge, Francis," was his father's reply to it; "I can trust your judgment, young as you are. This man," he continued, tapping the letter with his finger, "came here a few days since, and, after demanding strict secrecy from all but you, who must act as my assistant, he proposed to me—"

But it is needless to follow Mr. Barr's minute relation: suffice it, that it was a plan involving false representations on the part of Mr. Barr, for a certain and liberal remuneration, and a great advantage to the attorney who proposed it.

Young Barr had listened to his father's recital with many an impatient glance and agitated gesture, and when he had done, "Father," he said, with energy, "let not us, your wife and children, be the instruments of your temptation. Oh, never forget that they would feel a stain upon their name as a deeper misery even than starvation. Let us close our eyes determinedly against all consequences that might induce us to tread a questionable path: there is no agony like dishonour."

"Francis," replied his father, pointing to the two first-read letters, with a contracted brow, "do not let us deceive ourselves; what are these? My son, debt and poverty are sufficient to sully an honest name in the eyes of half the world; and this scheme proposed only contains the spirit of half the trading transactions in London. I might not have hesitated, but that I remembered I was once a gentleman."

"And are so still, my father!" interrupted the son, warmly: "let us keep the name as a sacred deposit, that the breath of slander or contempt may sully or obscure for a moment, but only ourselves can mar. Forgive me if I speak warmly. I have the energies of young hope to support my judgment—you the responsibilities of a husband and father to enfeeble yours."

His father's face was pale and his lips compressed as he listened. "You are right, Francis," he replied; "but, God help us! it is a sore temptation. The rich," he added, with a wan smile, "little think what they pray for, when they say 'Lead us not into temptation.' But it is decided, and we will speak of it no more. And now take this letter to Ellen," he said, putting the fourth epistle into the hands of his son. "Poor Ellen! I trust it is no disappointment for her."

"For Ellen!" said Francis, with a brightening look. Epistles were not very frequently addressed to the female members of the family, and Francis immediately guessed from whom this came. Taking two and three steps at a time, he mounted the stairs, and burst into the room where his mother and sisters were sitting. "Now, Ellen," he cried, keeping it carefully behind him, "what will you give me for what I hold in my hand!"

They had heard the postman's rap, and Ellen's face flushed, and her eye brightened with expectation—she could not speak.

"Trust to her honour," said Clara, gaily; "let her judge what it is worth."

Francis placed the letter in the hands it was directed to. Ellen examined the direction, lingeringly looked at the seal, and at length with trembling fingers broke it. After reading the first line, she shaded her face with her hand: the others tried to keep up a conversation, that she might feel more unobserved. After she had finished reading the letter, (it was not a long one,) she sat a few minutes looking at it; at last she raised her head, laid the letter on the table, and turned to her mother. Her face was pale, and her eyes glistening with tears that she would not suffer to overflow them; but she smiled. "Well, mamma," she said, "I must try again; it would not, it seems, suit the stage. But see

what he says," putting the letter towards her mother, who read it aloud. The writer was a man of real talent, one of those who give dignity to their profession (Mr. Macready), and it was written with that courtesy and delicacy of feeling which might have been expected from such a character: it was a decisive rejection, qualified by well-judged praise of the performance. A silence followed the reading of this letter;—the sisters and brother were dwelling upon its expressions of approbation, the mother on Ellen's disappointment.

"Come, Ellen," said Francis, "this should inspire you for the future." He turned round—Ellen had left the room.

They were bitter tears that she shed on her clasped hands when she reached her chamber. The blended bitterness of self-depreciation and renewed, almost hopeless, grief for the distress that she felt it now beyond her power to remove; and both were rendered more resistless in their operation by physical debility, occasioned by want of food and the almost insensible approaches of disease. It was affectionate consideration that left her to struggle with these feelings alone. The mother's first impulse had induced her to rise to follow her, but she re-seated herself with tears in her eyes.

They had partaken of a scanty meal of dry toast and tea without sugar. Clara, Anne, and their brother had returned from a stroll in the neighbouring park; the girls still retained their bonnets, and sat in the deep twilight of a summer's evening, listlessly watching, through the half-open window, the well-appointed carriages that were conveying the gay and splendidly attired children of fashion and prosperity to a scene of lavish ornament and rich devices for amusement in the neighbouring square. Ellen lay on the sofa, oppressed by a feeling of languor and depression she could no longer struggle against. The father and son were in the office below, endeavouring to occupy themselves in something that might at least be an attempt to remedy the evils that beset them; the mother had left the house, alone, about half an hour before. How many sad anticipations, murmuring thoughts, and bitter comparisons, passed through those two young but wintry hearts, as the gay equipages flashed in the lamplight, and rolled hollowly on to their gayest destination! The recollections of home, their early country home,—the summer-evening there, when the sleep of nature seemed that of an infant, undisturbed by those haunting cares and that restless splendour that trouble the repose of a city, as the dreams of experience;—the light-hearted laughter and cheerful voices that rang through the breathless shrubberies; or the later and more quiet walk, when moonlight strewn the path with fluttering shadows, and the stars told of a heaven that seemed to them but a continuation of earth. They contrasted with this their present condition, depressed, almost in their own eyes degraded, by their sense of the meanness and merely physical nature of those wants that overpowered them; and the consciousness of the loss of that respect, worthless as it is, that is the shadow of wealth, stand must consequently fade with it. But the personal feelings of each were swallowed up in sympathy for the rest; they felt that, had they been suffering alone, it might have been endured;—that was the poison in the wound, the overflowing drop in the chalice of misery.

In one of those streets of shops more frequented by necessity than fancy, but which yet is generally thronged as a thoroughfare, there stood, about the same hour, a female in a dark dress, with a dingy wrapping shawl, and a shabby, close, black bonnet; her face partly shaded by a black lace veil, now looking brown and crushed: she stood seemingly occupied in the examination of a window that certainly contained no object of general attraction; her hand was sometimes raised to her eyes, and a long and trembling sigh occasionally relieved the oppression of a heart beating thick and fast. At length she turned from the window, and walked on slowly, with a rapid and penetrating glance at the generally hurrying passengers. The prevailing characteristic of the countenances she thus scrutinised was care, but somewhat relaxed from the stern and troubled aspect of the morning, by the prospect of the peaceful night, perhaps the cheerful fireside. But many had passed thus before her, when her eye met one bearing a more than common

expression of good-humour and cheerfulness: it was a gentleman somewhat past the middle age, with a keen eye and a lofty brow. She advanced towards him, and standing so as somewhat to arrest his passage, she said, in hoarse and faltering accents, "Sir, my children have no food!" "Don't trouble me, good woman," he said, "I can't help it:"—and he passed on to attend a merry party to a place of amusement. She walked on with a flushed brow and compressed lips, and for some minutes her eyes were fixed on the pavement. A child passed her, hurrying along with a loaf under each arm, singing some street melody;—the sight unnerved her. And again she raised her eyes: they fell upon a haggard, grey-headed old man, in deep mourning; his threadbare coat and dejected look might have expressed poverty, but for the gold spectacles, seal, and handsome cane, that seemed to contradict it, and there was something in the sorrowful expression of his countenance that made her hope at least for sympathy. "Sir," she said, as he passed, "my children are sinking for want of food!" The low and broken, but well-modulated tone in which she spoke, gave a deeper expression to the few words; they were sufficient to arrest his steps. "God help you, my friend," he said, "you are richer than I, for I have lost mine!" A passing gust of wind had blown under her veil, and left her face unshaded, with the full light of a lamp shining on it;—it was a face that none could have looked on and doubted. The artlessness and truth of infancy were stamped upon those worn emaciated features in unquestionable characters: even a restlessness of the eyes and a quivering of the lip, the consequences of a distracted state of mind, served to confirm the impression. He was silently placing half-a-sovereign in her hand, when a gentleman approached, who was beginning to accost him with friendly hilarity, but catching a glimpse of the face of the female as she was striving to articulate a blessing—"Good God!" he exclaimed, "Mrs. Barr!" But, before he could recover from his astonishment, she had disappeared in a throng that was just then collecting round some accident or quarrel of street interest.

"You know that person, then?" said the old gentleman.

"I really don't know," said the other. "I could have sworn she was Mrs. Barr, a lady I knew in Hampshire; but that is impossible. You were giving her money when I came up—were you not?"

"She told me," said the old gentleman, "that her children were starving."

"It could not be, then," resumed the other; "for the Barrs I knew were a highly respectable family, and living in affluence. Yet it was strangely like her."

The conversation was pursued, and its results will be seen at a future period.

Meanwhile the father and son were endeavouring to console themselves with the consciousness of effort—the father, in overlooking once more some accounts that he had been employed to arrange; Francis, in finishing the sketch of a mechanical improvement, which he hopefully believed only required the means to bring forward to make their fortune. Again were they startled by a rap at the door,—a quick, sharp, double rap,—one of those that evidence the practice of steady nerves: again the son went to the door, and returned, ushering in a gentleman—he of "the keen eye and lofty brow," whom we have just seen bearing his fellow-creature's distress with such philosophic resignation. He advanced with the same good-humoured expression of countenance. "Well, Mr. Barr," he said, as he held out his hand with friendly alacrity, "you see I take the privilege of a friend, to intrude on you with business at this hour. The fact is, I am on my way to a party in a neighbouring street, and thought it a good opportunity to set that business in train that I mentioned to you the other day." He seated himself, and, waiting the other's reply, turned on the son a momentary glance of acute penetration: that open ingenuous countenance baffled him; the eye flashed—it might be with hope; there was a bright and smiling determination there, that might be for or against him; but, misconstruing the glance, its object was rising to leave the room, when his father, in a low and somewhat agitated tone, told him to remain.

"I have considered the subject," he continued, in a firmer voice, addressing his visitor, "and I must decline being engaged in it. Excuse me for adding, it bears on the face of it a character that is repugnant to my feelings—and principles."

He had hesitated in the last sentence; he felt a gentlemanly sympathy for the feelings of shame he expected such a reflection must excite. He was mistaken in the person he addressed; he heard him with smiling imperturbability.

"Psha! my good friend," he said; "excuse me for retorting, you are throwing away a real advantage for an empty fancy and a groundless scruple. Think better of it—do not carry the prejudices of one caste into another. My honour as a lawyer has never been doubted, and there appears to me no objection to the plan I propose. Your son," he added, turning to young Barr, "will advocate wider and more liberal views. I know he indulges in scientific speculations, which have a tendency to enlarge the mind: and, by-the-bye, my young friend, I think I have a connexion that may forward them."

"Sir," replied Francis, with a cheek flushed with irritation at the consciousness that the hook was baited with the vanities of his heart and the object of his castled dreams, "you are mistaken in me—I entirely agree with my father's opinion. I see no reason why the chivalrous honour of the gentleman should not as much influence the transactions of a trade or profession, as the words and actions of the noblest in the land. It must be, indeed, a vain and useless quality that lives only in the sunshine."

"My young friend," rejoined the other, with a derisive smile of superiority, that still further irritated the person he addressed, "you talk as the enthusiasm of youth and inexperience will talk. The honour you speak of seems, among gentlemen, to evaporate in the smoke of a duel, or the payment of a gambling debt. Do not let us aspire to their privileges."

"There is no rank, sir," returned Francis, warmly, "however mean, but may aspire to its highest privileges—single-hearted truth and courteous consideration for others in every word and action; and, that I may not be tempted to forget the latter, I will wish you good night." He rose, and with a bow quitted the room.

His adversary returned the compliment with calm good-humour, and, again turning to Mr. Barr, endeavoured to persuade him, by every argument he could think of as influential, to further his views. Mr. Barr's temper was not so easily excited as his son's, and he was satisfied with coolly continuing to decline. At length the visitor rose to depart; but, ere he did so, he threw the last arrow from his quiver.

"Oh," he said, "I had nearly forgotten to say that a man, a Mr. Evans—a butcher, I think—has been with me about some trifling bill of yours. He is a disagreeable fellow, and I would advise you as a friend, to wind up matters with him, for I cannot keep him off much longer; he is a perfect bulldog in his obstinacy in law disputes. And now I must wish you good night, and I will expect the issue of a pillow-consideration of this affair."

Refusing to take any further answer then, he took his leave with unshaken good humour, attended to the door with cool respect by Mr. Barr; but, after having moved about fifty yards from it, the departing visitor turned round to reconnoitre the house from the opposite pathway. He was just in time to catch the glimpse of a female in a dark shawl and a veiled black bonnet, that his acute eye instantly recognised, entering the door he had quitted, with the air of a dweller. For a moment his better feelings triumphed, and he was shocked into sympathy; but with a "psa!" he threw this feeling from him, and proceeded to his destination more cheerfully, from the knowledge of the power of the temptation there operating.

Those who have lived in the sameness of undisturbed prosperity cannot appreciate—will hardly understand—the exhilaration that attends a moment of respite from crushing want: to them it will seem unnatural and improbable that that night, round a moderately stored supper-table, and with the certainty of a breakfast the following morning, the Barrs spent an hour of gay sallies and reviving hopes. Blessed be God! there is no life, I firmly believe, but hath its gleams of sunshine, its hours of gladness,—perhaps the brighter and purer for the intervening darkness,—and it is only a sullied conscience that can utterly exclude from the heart these angel-visitations. The adieus of pence and affection were said, and each retired to the hard and scantily furnished bed allotted them. Many a tearful aspiration and earnest prayer ascended that night to "Our Father in heaven," from the hearts of these his afflicted children, mingled with thankfulness for the blessings they yet enjoyed. Determinations were formed, gilded over with the halo of the future, to which reviving hope and the prospect of a few hours of peace gave practicability; but there was one, the mother, who carried to her pillow a secret sense of humiliation, mingled with the sweet consciousness of sacrifice for those he loved.

THE SPIDER FAMILY.

THERE is, perhaps, no genus of insects which is more generally interesting than the spiders. The species are numerous, and all are very distinct in their economy, size, colour, and manners. Their use as a link of animated nature seems to be to check the overabundance of flies—to furnish food for several tribes of small birds in winter—and to supply material for the construction of the nests of several of our summer choristers.

They are all animals of prey; and in their nature either very cunning, or very cruel. Some of them depend for a living on their personal courage and prowess; others on the mortal effects of their bite; but most of them upon the curious toils they weave for entangling their prey.

Some few of them weave no web, having neither *spinners* nor a store of glutinous matter for the fabrication of snares. These, having no home, are rovers; excellent spies, and seize their prey by an instant and furious assault. Another species live on water, and can dive with great adroitness; carrying down with them a globule of air in the manner of a diving-bell, and within which they can live for a considerable time. Some live in holes in the ground, which are neatly lined with a closely-woven tissue like satin, with a principal entrance above, around which an extensive apron-like web is spread, to enthrall whatever creeping or flying insect alights upon it. Others live in holes of walls, line the interior, and spread an apron of flocky silk web round the entrance, like the preceding; and yet they are very different in their manners:—while the first rushes out and seizes the intruder, and drags it into his cavern, the latter also rushes out, inflicts a bite on the back of the fly, and instantly retreats into his abode, leaving his victim, after a few convulsive struggles, to die.

House and barn spiders usually weave their triangular webs in the angles of the building. They are of a close texture; and as they are a little turned up at the front edge, appear to be designed to hold whatever falls upon them. These spiders trust to their powerful limbs and jaws in seizing their prey, which, when captured, are ruthlessly dragged into their den, to be devoured at leisure.

One species of garden or hedge spider, is deficient in both courage and strength; but makes up for this by the intricacy of the web she weaves. It is a perfect labyrinth; so that if a heedless fly enters into the interior of the fabric, it can rarely find its way out again, without being entangled in some of the complicated meshes. The web is constructed with two or three horizontal platforms pretty closely woven, serving both as floors and roofs to the different galleries. These floors and ceilings are connected by numerous upright or oblique supports fixed between, as well as many irregular lines interlacing each other. The residence of this spider is a closely-woven tube at one side of her entangling apparatus; her size small, marked with brown spots, or streaks on a yellow ground. When they find a fly struggling in their toils, they approach cautiously, and throw from their hind legs additional threads to hamper the struggler still more in his attempts to escape.

But the most common spider in gardens and fields everywhere seen in summer and autumn, is the geometric species, so called from the regularity with which *her* web is formed. We say *her* web, because the males weave no web, and are decided polygamists. Their webs are generally formed in a nearly perpendicular position, between two erect branches of tall herbs, shrubs, or trees. After fixing on a convenient and secure retreat, on or under a hollow leaf, which she connects and environs with her web, forming what may be called her bed-room, she next circumscribes an area between the side bearers, either of a square or triangular space, sufficient to hold her intended web. After lining out the boundary, she fixes on the central point by some instinctive calculation, altogether unaccountable; and from which she carries out diverging lines in every direction, fixing them to those of the boundary. She next connects all the diverging lines at the centre by several circular lines worked rather closely; and then proceeds to unite them at the outside by a tissue of concentric lines fixed to each of the divergents, till the whole skeleton is filled up with concentric lines about one-eighth of an inch from each other. Her bed-room is either above or below the plane of her web; but wherever it is, there is always a strong line leading from it to the central platform, her station by day while watching for prey.

The plane of the web is never exactly perpendicular, and always at a certain angle from the horizontal; and this for the purpose of

allowing to fall clear of the web dead flies, or other offal the insect wishes to get rid of. And, besides, the oblique position of the web contributes to her personal safety; because, as she always rests head downwards on the under side, she drops in an instant from any enemy approaching from above. There is another purpose to which the obliquity of the web is subservient. When a fly is caught, it is at first enveloped in a winding-sheet of threads, spun and wrapped round by the spider, confining both legs and wings, like an Egyptian mummy. When so enshrouded, the fly is cut away from the toils, and remains hanging to a thread, which the spider holds in one of her hind feet; and thus dangling, is carried to the central residence, and fixed there, to be devoured at leisure. This spider never seizes a fly; but as soon as one is entangled, she runs towards it, and with her two fore-feet turns it round and round, while the two hind feet are alternately drawing a thread from the spinners, and throwing it loosely over the fly, till it is completely encased with the web.

The thread produced by spiders is ejected, as well as drawn, from a store of mucilaginous matter contained in the abdomen, and ejected at the tail through a number of small *mammæ*, called spinners, and which jets being united by adhering to each other, form a pretty strong thread. When first ejected, it is remarkably elastic and adhesive, requiring only a very slight touch to fix it to any other body. It becomes iridescent, and somewhat more tenacious by exposure to the air; but, unlike the produce of the silk-worm, it is entirely destitute of durable fibre. A curious silk-weaver once collected as much cobweb as, when carefully spun and woven, gave as much fabric as sufficed to make a pair of ladies' gloves; but they only remained as a useless curiosity.

Every motion of this spider is accompanied by a discharge of a line to prevent a fall, or to lead back to the place whence she set out. When she has a desire to pass from one tree to another, she turns her back to the wind, and drawing from her store an unusual quantity of web, throws it floating in the wind, till she finds that it is fixed to some opposite object. She then runs along it with another line, to make a permanent bridge for her own purposes, or only as a temporary means of removal.

The manner in which she defends her web from other spiders which may accidentally drop upon it, is very curious. The moment the intruders touch it, she runs to entangle them, as she is as fond of her own species, if smaller, as she is of flies. The stranger generally escapes by the line on which she descended; but if she runs to the lower side, the owner pursues and cuts her adrift. Sometimes she endeavours to pull back the fugitive, but seldom succeeds. The male is a much more slender insect than the female, but with longer and stronger legs: his front claws are also stronger, and seemingly intended either for clutching his prey, or for personal defence.

The female, towards the end of summer, lays a cluster of eggs in a crevice of the bark of trees, or in holes in walls or other structures, covering them with a closely-wrought tissue from her own store of material. Here they remain till the warmth of spring brings them forth to their business of weaving, which they commence when no larger than the head of a large pin. The web and its proportion are always regulated by the size and length of span of the "operative." At first they are not larger than a sixpence; but when full-grown, occupying a space twelve or fourteen inches square. As soon as severe cold sets in, the old spiders are first benumbed, remain inactive near where they have deposited their eggs, and at last die or are devoured by birds or other insects.

The gossamer spider is one of the most numerous of its tribe, and also one of the smallest. We know nothing of their breeding-places, nor what kind of food they live upon. Although wingless, they make very long journeys in the air. They are so light, that the least current of air carries them to great distances; and on some occasions, when the air near the surface of the earth is highly rarefied, they spring aloft from the ground, and in such numbers that their webs (for each leaves a long train of line behind) become entangled into large tufts which may be seen flying at a great height in the air, and when they fall fringing the trees and hedges with the remains.

A naturalist of considerable ability avows, that this little spider can propel itself against the wind. This we cannot certify; but we have seen them issue from the fringe of a window-curtain, and fly to different parts of a warm room, without any appreciable current of air to carry them from the window into the interior; and yet there may have been partial jets of cold air, which they availed themselves of unperceived by us. They have certainly a peculiar buoyancy, which enables them to rise into the air without the assistance of a current; for it is astonishing how soon a

stubble-field, or a fresh ploughed ridge of land, in a calm morning, is covered with their webs. The abundance of gossamer is always a sign of fine settled weather; but how or where they are bred, on what they subsist, or where they dispose of themselves when their summer enjoyments and economy are over, we believe has not yet been discovered. In their flight they keep themselves steadily poised in a horizontal position, by means of their legs, which are fully extended, and seem to answer the purpose of wings, acting like the cap of a parachute.

Of roving spiders, that is, such as have no settled home, there are several species. Some of them keep constantly on the surface of the ground, seizing any insect they chance to meet with—disabled flies, or small caterpillars which fall from trees. At night, or in wet weather, they shelter themselves under clods or stones; but are mostly seen creeping about during the day. These web-less spiders are all of a more spare and lanky habit than the spinners. The abdomen is more depressed, and lessened off towards the tail; and though not entirely destitute of producing web for securing their eggs, they weave no ensnaring toils. One of them is grey, middle-sized, and very much resembles a crab, as well in shape as in action. Another ground species is black, or very dark brown: she is known from all others, by carrying about with her, attached to the tail, her bag of eggs, until she can find a proper place in which to dispose of them. If the bag be taken from her by force, she will either try to fix it again, or bear it off in her jaws. Another black one, of a somewhat larger size, is very numerous on pasture ground, and will run before a passenger with considerable swiftness.

But the most characteristic of all the roving spiders is a little grey one, commonly seen on the trunks of trees and garden walls, especially when the sun shines warmly on them, and where flies come to bask in the heat. Here may be seen this audacious little fellow, skulking along any crack or hollow of the surface, every now and then raising his head over the brink, to get a wider range of view of the surface, and to desecrate an unsuspecting fly which he may suddenly pounce upon. When so employed, his cautious motions, his four glaring lamp-like eyes ranged in his forehead, besides two others on each side, give him a large field of vision. Should a fly alight near him, down he squats, and remains motionless: if out of distance, he will crawl round any prominent part of the surface to get nearer his object, and still with the greatest caution. When he gets within striking distance, he prepares to take a spring by drawing his feet under him, and, quick as lightning, darts on his prey, to which he clings, and both fall to the ground, where the fly is soon dispatched. This freebooter will attack any living thing of moderate size, as earwigs, ants, and beetles, as well as flies; and if the point of a slender twig be slowly pushed towards him, he will pounce upon it most daringly. When wandering in quest of prey he is ever on the alert, and frequently turning to look behind; indeed, circumspection is his chief characteristic.

With respect to the age of spiders, it is not in our power to add anything certain. The hiding manner in which house-spiders spend their lives, and their frequent change of place, and this mostly performed in the dark, renders an intimate acquaintance with their economy not easily attainable. That they have the power of casting their skin (and which may be taken as indicating a renewal of life) is certain; as we often see the entire skin of the large barn species hanging to the web, as if just thrown off. The skin appears to be discharged by the animal, by its bursting from head to tail, as if unlaced or unbuttoned. When the body is thus uncased, the legs and arms are probably withdrawn one after another, leaving the whole skin as entire as when it clothed the insect. And if we consider the difference of their size,—some exceedingly small, and others very and hideously large, it may be presumed that the latter have lived more than one year. As to the summer spiders in gardens and fields, it is more than probable that, as they come into active life with the increasing warmth of spring, and totally disappear at the commencement of winter, they are only summer livers, and seasonal visitors.

The faculty of sight appears to be peculiarly necessary for the welfare of the spider, as most, if not all the species, are provided with eight eyes, though not all arranged alike. Some have the whole eight in front of the thorax, placed in two lines: others have them in three lines; but the majority have them, partly in front, and partly on the sides of the thorax. Notwithstanding their number of eyes, the weavers appear to work more by touch than by sight.

Spiders are often accused of being poisonous, and capable of inflicting incurable wounds with their fangs. We have all heard

of the venom of the *tarantula*; but it appears that this dreaded insect has disappeared along with those authors who wrote its marvellous history. Some of the tropical species are very large, and arrayed in beautiful green and gold colours; others lurid, and of a hideous aspect. And yet, in some places, even in the South of Europe and in Africa, a dish of fried spiders is accounted a dainty, and partaken of with as high a relish as are shrimps or crayfish in Britain!

NECESSITY OF STEAM NAVIGATION ON THE SOUTH AMERICAN RIVERS.

SIR WOODBINE PARISH, many years *chargé d'affaires* from the court of St. James's to Buenos Ayres, has recently published a volume* replete with sound information respecting that state and its immediate neighbours, who together form the nominal confederation of the Argentine Republic or the United Provinces of La Plata: nor is the work confined to these alone, but embraces many very interesting particulars respecting Paraguay, the Banda Oriental, and Patagonia, and the other southern and but partially explored districts of South America. The work is illustrated by the most correct map that has hitherto been given of the countries therein mentioned, compiled from the most authentic authorities, for which materials were anxiously and carefully sought during the period of his residence at Buenos Ayres. Much of the geographical information, now for the first time made public, was buried in the archives of the old Spanish government, and but for the exertions of Sir W. Parish, would still have remained useless.

The central parts of South America have hitherto remained so inaccessible to foreign commerce, chiefly from the peculiar course of policy adopted by Francia, the tyrant of Paraguay, and the wars and financial difficulties which have paralysed the energies of Buenos Ayres, as to have shut them out from the attention that is due to them. Although possessing "capabilities," as the landscape gardeners have it, which, in the more northern continent, would have stocked the land with "pioneers" and "squatters," the richest parts of South America are less densely populated at the present day than they were under the *ancien régime*.

"The whole of that vast space lying between Brazil and the Cordillera of Chile and Peru, and extending from the twenty-second to the forty-first degree of south latitude, with the exception of Paraguay, and the Banda Oriental or Uruguay," now independent states, but formerly under the rule of the viceroy of Buenos Ayres, constitute the federation of the United Provinces of La Plata.

This vast extent of country, owing to the political causes which formerly prohibited foreign trade, and subsequently have convulsed the government and impoverished the people, is scarcely known in Europe. Almost the whole of the foreign trade is transacted at Buenos Ayres, and the exports principally confined to bullion, hides, skins, and jerked beef, so little care being bestowed on the cultivation of the soil, or attention paid to native produce, that, although no land is better fitted for a corn country, they were until recently dependent upon the United States for all the flour consumed in the country; and although indigo and cotton of excellent quality, cochineal, dye-woods, and many other articles of general demand, are among the natural productions of the country, no attempt has hitherto been made to prepare them for the market.

The noble rivers which intersect the country are comparatively useless, for no steam-boats float upon their waters. Of these rivers the Paraguay is the most important. It has its sources between the thirteenth and fourteenth degrees of south latitude, "in those ranges which, though of very trifling elevation themselves, appear to connect the lofty mountains of Peru and Brazil, and to constitute the water-shed of some of the principal rivers of South America." Many navigable rivers join it both from the east and west. On the eastern side the Jauru, the sources of which are close to those of the Guaporé, which runs in the oppo-

site direction into the Madera and Amazons, is the first of any consequence. The short portage which intervenes between the heads of these rivers is all that breaks a continuous watercourse from the mouths of the Amazons to those of La Plata. The mouth of the Jauru is in latitude 16° 25' south; longitude 320° 10' east of Ferro. "A little below the Jauru commences a wide region of swamps called the lake or lakes of Xarayes, which, during the periodical inundations of the rivers that descend from the mountains to the north of Cuyabá, is flooded for a vast extent, the waters forming one great inland sea, to the depth of ten or twelve feet, extending between 200 and 300 miles east and west, and upwards of 100 from north to south. As the rainy season passes away, this mass of waters is finally carried off by the Paraguay, which even here, 1200 miles in a direct line from the sea, is navigable for vessels of forty or fifty tons.

"From the west its most important affluents are the Pilcomayo and the Vermejo, which fall into it below Assumption: both flow through a prodigious extent of country, having their sources in the rich districts of Upper Peru." The first is not navigable for any extent, but the "Vermejo, on the contrary, which falls into the Paraguay still further down, has been more than once proved to afford a navigable communication with the province of Salta. First by Cornejo, in 1790, who starting from the confluence of the rivers Centa and Tarija, reached the Paraguay in fifty-five days; the distance by the river being, according to his computation, no less than 407½ leagues. And more recently, in 1826, by Don Pablo Soria, the agent of some spirited individuals in Buenos Ayres, who, about that time, formed an association for the purpose of endeavouring to open a water communication between the capital and the rich districts of the upper provinces. The vessel they built for the purpose was fifty-two feet long, and drew about two feet of water; which, with but little more assistance than was necessary to keep in the mid-stream, was floated down from the neighbourhood of Oran by the current, and in fifty-seven days entered the Paraguay, without any other impediment than a feeble attempt on the part of some Indians, armed with bows and arrows, to annoy them as they passed through their lands." Soria and his companions were, however, seized on by the notorious Francia, and detained in captivity for five years. He also deprived them of their papers, and thus the details of a most interesting voyage were lost, although the great and highly-important fact was established beyond dispute of the existence of a safe and navigable water-communication the whole way from Oran to Buenos Ayres; a result which must, sooner or later, be of immense consequence to the inhabitants of the upper provinces.

About thirty miles below the mouth of the Vermejo, the Paraguay is joined from the east by the great river Parana, which name it takes till it is finally lost in the Rio de la Plata. The Parana, rivalling in extent the Paraguay itself, rises in the mountain-chains to the north-west of Rio de Janeiro, in latitude 21 degrees south. Its course is, however, interrupted by many falls and rapids, whilst the Paraguay, on the contrary, may be passed up by vessels of some burden the whole way to the Jauru, in latitude 16° 25', presenting the extraordinary extent of an uninterrupted inland navigation of nearly nineteen degrees of latitude, calculating the straight distance north and south, throughout the whole of which there is not a rock or stone to impede the passage; the bottom being everywhere of clay or fine sand. The least depth of water is in the channels through the delta by which it discharges itself into the Plata; but, in the passage called the Guazú (the great canal), there is seldom less than two and a half fathoms.

The Paraguay, like the Nile, is subject to annual inundations. "It begins to rise about the end of December, and increases gradually till the month of April, when it begins to fall something more rapidly until the month of July. There is afterwards a second rising, called by the natives *repunte*; but this, though regular, is of no great consequence, the river never overflowing its banks. It is probably occasioned by the swelling of the rivers from the winter rains in the temperate zone. The extent of these periodical risings is, of course, in some degree regulated by the quantity, more or less, of rain which may fall during the corresponding season; but in general the inundation takes place with great regularity, the waters rising gradually about twelve feet in the bed of the river in four months; this is the ordinary average of the increase of the river after its junction with the Parana; though above it, at Assumption, where the river is more confined, the rise is said to be sometimes as much as five or six fathoms.

* Buenos Ayres, and the Provinces of the Río de la Plata. By Sir Woodbine Parish, K.C.H., &c. &c. Murray—London, 1836.

"During the inundation the river is exceedingly turbid, from the great quantity of vegetable substances and mud brought down by it: the velocity of the stream in the higher and narrower parts of the river at first prevents their deposition, but as it approaches the lower lands or pampas, where it overflows its bed, these substances are spread over the face of the land, forming a grey slimy soil, which, on the abatement of the waters, is found to increase vegetation in a surprising degree.

"A calculation has been made by Colonel Monasterios, author of an excellent paper on this river, printed in the Statistical Register of Buenos Ayres for 1822, that no less than 4000 square leagues of country are annually covered by the waters during the periodical inundations of the Parana."

The Uruguay, which contributes with the Paraguay and Parana to form the great estuary of La Plata, takes its name from the numerous falls and rapids which mark its course; during the floods they are, however, passable for boats, but in the dry season portage must be resorted to. It forms the eastern boundary of the provinces of Entre Rios and the Missions, separating them from Brazil and the Banda Oriental, and is navigable during the whole extent of the Buenos Ayrean territory. "The Negro, which runs into it from the Banda Oriental, derives its name (the black river) from the Sarsaparilla plant, which, at a particular season, rots upon its banks, and falls into the stream in such immense quantities as to discolour its waters, which are found to be highly medicinal, and are much in request in consequence."

The chief rivers of the south, the Colorado and the Cuso Leuber or Rio Negro, the latter forming the boundary of the State in that direction, are both navigable for a considerable extent, but lying in country yet unoccupied, save by the Indian tribes, very little information concerning them has yet been obtained. Besides the rivers we have mentioned, there are many others of minor importance. Of these many, after running through a large tract of country, finally lose themselves in the plains, gradually diminishing and terminating in extensive lakes and marshes.

This extensive river communication is in the present state of the country almost useless. The voyage up the river to Santa Fé or Assumption occupies nearly as much time as that from Europe, and almost all the internal communications are carried on by the tedious and expensive process of land-carriage over a country destitute of regularly-formed roads. The trade that was formerly carried on between the upper provinces and Peru and Chili has been interrupted and ruined by the domestic disturbances which have shaken all these states, and there does not appear to be energy or enterprise sufficient in the native character to make any effort to regain their lost advantages.

In describing the provinces of the Argentine Republic, Sir W. Parish divides them into three principal sections—the Littorine or eastern—the Central or northern—and those lying west of the province of Buenos Ayres, commonly called the provinces of Cuyo.

It would occupy too much space for us to enter into particulars respecting each of these provinces; for such we would refer our readers to the book itself. We must content ourselves with a general review of the productions and capabilities of the respective districts.

The Littorine provinces are Buenos Ayres and Santa Fé on the west, and Entre Rios, Corrientes, and the Missions, on the east of the Parana. Of these, extending as they do through a large extent of latitude, and consequently diversified climates, the natural productions are varied. The nominal extent of Buenos Ayres proper is immense; but, although it offers every facility for agricultural enterprise, it is almost entirely given up to grazing farms (estancieros), where multitudes of cattle are "raised" to furnish foreign markets with hides and jerked beef, an immense quantity of the latter article being taken off by the West Indies for the Negro population. The southern part of this State is still frequented by the Indians; and from the disputes which frequently occur between them and the out-lying settlers, the southern estancieros are frequently subject to pillage; many Christian prisoners are at this moment in the hands of the Indians, and have been in vain attempted to be redeemed. This state of things must apparently continue until the boundary of the Rio Negro is firmly established. Santa Fé bids fair, if steam navigation be once introduced, to become a formidable rival to Buenos Ayres itself. Its central situation gives it great advantages; and under the old government, when Paraguay formed part of the vice-royalty and a constant communication was kept up with Peru and Chile, it was an important place. Still it is rich in herds, its *estancieros* ranking with the finest in the country, but the old trade is gone and the population is greatly diminished. "Its situation," says Sir

W. Parish, "offers striking facilities for carrying on a more active transit-trade between Buenos Ayres and the provinces north of Cordova. The river Salado, on which it stands, is known to be navigable for barges as high up as Matara, in the province of Santiago, and at no great distance from that city; if it were made use of, there would be a saving of upwards of 250 leagues of land-carriage in conveying goods from Buenos Ayres to Santiago; but even if this should turn out not to be so practicable as it is said to be, a direct road is open from Santa Fé, which, passing by the lakes of Porongos, skirts the river Dulce, and falls into the high road from Cordova, a few posts south of the city of Santiago, which at the lowest computation would still be 100 leagues short of the over-land route now used from the capital to the upper provinces by way of Cordova.

"In any part of the world such a saving of land-carriage would be a considerable object; but in a country where the roads are just as nature has made them, and where the only means of transport for heavy goods are the most unwieldy of primitive waggons, drawn by oxen—the slowest of all conveyances,—not to speak of its expense, and the risks, independently of the wear and tear necessarily attending it, it becomes of the greatest importance. That it has not hitherto been available, is owing to the difficulties attending the navigation of a large river, not only against the current, but against a prevalence of contrary winds, which have rendered the passage of the Parana up to Santa Fé even more tedious and expensive than the long over-land journey. But the introduction of steam-boats would at once obviate this, and enable the people of Buenos Ayres to send their heaviest goods to Santa Fé by water-carriage in less time than a horse can now gallop over the intervening country, for there is no reason in the world why the ordinary voyage thither should exceed at the utmost three days. I can hardly imagine a greater change in the prospects of a people than this would open to the Santa Feicians.

"There is, however, another point of view, of serious consequence to Buenos Ayres, in which for her own sake it concerns her to look to the advantages, if not to the necessity, of taking speedy measures to introduce steam-navigation upon the Parana. Since the erection of the Banda Oriental into an independent state, the yearly imports into Monte Video have increased out of all ratio to the scanty population of that state—it is very evident what becomes of the excess, and that not only the people on the eastern, but those on the western, shores of the Uruguay, are supplied through that channel. The government of Monte Video takes care so to regulate its duties as to make this a profitable trade:—whilst it cannot be denied that the inhabitants of Entre Rios and Santa Fé have quite as much right to traffic with their neighbours as those of Mendoza and Salta have to trade with Chile and Peru.

"Buenos Ayres has already suffered a great loss of revenue in consequence, and this loss will yearly increase, to the great detriment of the national credit, for which she is responsible, and to the still further estrangement of the provinces from each other, unless she takes active means to counteract the evil:—those means are in her own hands. The introduction of steam-navigation, by establishing a cheaper communication between her own port and the Littorine provinces, will soon put an end to the profits of the over-land trade which is at present carried on through the Banda Oriental. It may, perhaps, be necessary, in the first instance, to grant some remission of the ordinary duties, in the shape of drawback or otherwise, upon goods reshipped for other parts of the republic in steamers, as well as upon all produce of the country received by the same conveyance in exchange:—but, whatever apparent sacrifice Buenos Ayres may make to promote this object, she may be assured she will be repaid a hundred-fold by the results.

"If the confederation of these provinces is to be a real one, and for joint benefit, they must pull together, and help one another. They possess, in a singular degree, within themselves, the means of mutual aid and support, and, if properly applied, they can hardly fail to insure them a great increase of individual prosperity and national importance.

"The reverse of the picture has been foretold in words which no man can gainsay:—'*if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.*'"

Santa Fé, and the provinces of Entre Rios, Corrientes and the Missions, although now almost wholly given up to pasturage for the larger herds of cattle reared upon the *estancieros*, or grazing farms, are capable of furnishing in abundance numerous articles in constant demand in European markets. Besides the yerba-maté or Paraguay tea, which grows wild in the woods, cotton, tobacco, rice, sugar and indigo, the cactus, from which most excellent cordage can be manufactured, and which bears the cochineal insect,

are among the valuable productions, and have formerly been partially cultivated. When the Missions were under the control of the Jesuits, they by care and skill so much improved the yerba, as almost to monopolise that trade, but since their banishment its cultivation has been wholly neglected, and so little is now brought to market, that the use of China tea is beginning to supersede it in Buenos Ayres. The whole territory of the mission formerly so flourishing is now depopulated.

The central or northern provinces are rich in metals* and in all the productions usually found in such latitudes, and are remarkable for the abundance of salt found upon the extensive plains. The western provinces, or Cuya, are in a very impoverished state. Much of the country, consisting chiefly of alluvial soil, is exceedingly rich, but almost wholly uncultivated, and where occupied at all, made use of chiefly for cattle-farms. Wine and brandy, and more recently corn, are the chief articles sent to market.

With all these natural advantages, the want of means of transit makes this fine country poor and miserable. What trade they have had is passing into the hands of the Brazilians and the inhabitants of the Banda Oriental, who at their port of Monte Video import goods at a cheaper rate than is possible at Buenos Ayres, where the heavy debt contracted during war renders the duties burdensome. An increase of trade and the revival of prosperity, depend on the introduction of European capital and energy. With them the steam-boat will arrive, and the great water communication of South America will be covered with the rich burdens they will bear from the central parts of the great continent to Buenos Ayres.

Sir W. Parish states it to be his conviction that "if the governments of Buenos Ayres, Santa Fé, and Corrientes, would but unite in a sincere determination to give a fair trial to the experiment, men would be found at Buenos Ayres who would desire no better than to be employed on such a service:—as to any opposition Dr. Francia might offer to it, it is not worth a moment's consideration.† Give an English midshipman, of sufficient experience, an armed steamer and a picked crew, either of his own countrymen or North Americans, to whom he might add some of the excellent sailors of Paraguay, and I am quite sure he would carry a cargo from Buenos Ayres up the Vermejo in perfect safety to Oran, despite of Dr. Francia or any such bugbear. This, however, is an object which must have the cordial support and co-operation of the ruling powers. If they shut their eyes to the importance of its success, it would be labour thrown away for any individual to volunteer the attempt.

"The government of Buenos Ayres, as the authorities charged with the general interests of the Republic, from their habitual intercourse with the people of other countries, ought to be fully able to appreciate the immense benefits which steam-navigation has produced elsewhere, and how greatly it has tended to promote the prosperity and civilisation of other nations. It is in their power to extend those blessings to their own countrymen in the heart of the South American continent, and to produce a really United Confederation of the Provinces, instead of that which is now little more than nominal, from the vast distances which intervene, and operate as a bar to almost any intercourse between them.

"With the establishment of steam-navigation, distance will cease to be distance, and the upper provinces will find a cheap and ready vent for an abundance of productions which are now not worth the heavy expenses of sending down by land-carriage to Buenos Ayres.

"It is a grave question, deserving the most serious attention of those to whom the government of these countries is at present intrusted, and in the early solution of which, perhaps, their future political destinies are involved to an extent far beyond the comprehension of any casual observer."

We have here given but a brief and imperfect sketch of the condition and capabilities of Buenos Ayres. We must refer those who are desirous of more information to the volume from which we have so freely quoted, a volume well worth an attentive perusal. Our object in noticing it has been to show that Canada and Australia are not the only quarters of the globe where British skill and capital can be made availing. There a comparatively unpromising nature has been forced to render tribute to the energy of man. Here she pours her riches into his lap, and they are suffered to drop unheeded.

* Vast masses of native iron are frequently met with.

† A small iron steamer, which might be had for 25,000, or 30,000*l.*, would be quite sufficient to begin with."

AN EVENING WITH COALHEAVERS.

It was on a fine evening in the middle of summer, that I, an incorrigible *street-walker*, was passing through that region of the city of Westminster that lies between the Adelphi and Whitehall, and had come pretty near to Hungerford Market, when I suddenly saw before me a moving group of rather an unusual aspect. There was a goodly number of people close together, and a man's head and shoulders rising high over all. On a nearer view, I found they were principally *coalheavers*, two of whom carried the man aforesaid upon their shoulders, sitting astride a pole. Much ungratified curiosity seemed to be excited in the neighbourhood by the presence of this phenomenon; and, as a matter of course, the "ears of the houses" within view (so Shylock called his casements) were all thrown wide open to catch information. For a moment I supposed that this uneasy exaltation of the chosen individual above his fellows might be the reward of merit, and that thus was it always done to those whom coalheavers delight to honour. So, pursuing this idea, my imagination flew back on rapid pinions to the heroic ages, when warriors were wont to exalt and bear on their shields him they chose for their chieftain or for king! But, upon inquiry, I found myself quite *out* in this conjecture, and all my fine speculations sent to the dogs. "This here wagabone," said my kind respondent—(The gist of what he did say was this, that the pot-girl of the public-house loved a young comrade "not wisely, but too well")—"And so we're making *un* ride the stake, just to mend his manners *summat*—that's all, sir." "Here then," thought I, as the current of my thoughts ran with velocity in another channel, "here is the homage that humble, untaught nature pays to virtue!" I lifted up my hands in an ecstasy, and fervently thanked Heaven that I had at last met with men in whose hearts the feelings of natural justice found an abode; men, who could not look tamely on and see, without practical reprobation, the tender blossom fall withered at their feet, or press to their hearts him whose pestilential breath had blighted it in its freshness! "Virtue," thought I, in continuation, (for I now felt the sentimental *furore* strong upon me,) "Virtue, driven from the palace of the proud, has indeed taken refuge in the dwellings of the lowly! I will go even now, and make myself acquainted with these unsophisticated men, and refresh all my better feelings by a closer scrutiny of their character." All this while the penitent sat unmoved, a tobacco-pipe in his mouth, and seemingly altogether unconscious of the intense interest his appearance had excited in my anxious bosom.

Each member of the procession had in his hand a pot of porter; and as it moved on in slow progression, at intervals the grateful beverage was handed by several to the delinquent, "for grief," they said, "was dry." And I could not help remarking herein the operation of that humane and wise principle which all judicious legislators so much recommend, though marvellously seldom able to reduce to practice,—viz. that mercy should always temper the awards of justice, and that punishment ought to be corrective, but not vindictive. In a word, I followed those sooty objects of my rising esteem, and soon arrived at the public-house called the Northumberland Arms, situate at the bottom of Northumberland-street; which is, I understand, a kind of head-quarters or trysting-place for those who heave coal. I entered, and following the sound of tramping feet along an unlighted passage, found myself in a large apartment, wherein, having groped my way to a corner, under a large-faced antique clock, there I determined to sit for the remainder of the evening, and make observations.

A London tap-room is not unfrequently, in one sense, like to the Temple of Knowledge, in that, all is dark when you first enter; and it is only by a diligent use of the faculties, and after a lapse of time, that you begin to arrive at discoveries. Being Monday night, (a period when the week is yet young, and while

the pecuniary stream has not as yet ebbed very low in the pockets of the industrious,) the place was quite full; and I had good reason to congratulate myself on the possession of the convenient nook which fortune had taken care to leave unoccupied for my convenience. As soon as the converse became general, it ran most on the example they had just been making, and bets were freely offered and taken on all sides as to the probabilities of *Ben's* (the culprit) making an honest woman of ruined *Sukey*, the ex-Hebe of the place. *Ben's* looks were much consulted on this head, and many indirect suggestions were pointed his way; but he, to use the expressive language of vulgarity, "cocked his eye," looked knowing, and smoked a quiet pipe, but said nothing. Much animated conversation ensued, and that not a little miscellaneous: politics, trade, the corn-laws, with "the cursed dear loaf" in front, were some of the topics handled in a manner wondrously original.

Presently one man expressed a common sensation, by saying he was *very peckish*, and called for a rump-steak with a lordly air. I took particular notice of this individual, for he seemed to be the acknowledged wit of the house; and certainly he was a great wag in his way. He experienced much success in his endeavours to raise laughter, and seemed to have as absolute a power of relaxing the jaws of his auditors into the broadest of grins, as the sun has in distending the shells of oysters. But it is with sorrow I say it, that his jokes were too racy, and do not admit of insertion here: tender stomachs must be fed with babes' nurture. There he sat, however, like Apollo, shooting his rays on all sides, between his steak and his pot; turning from the one to the other, as a man passes from his mistress to his friend, the perfect picture of happiness.—In the course of the night, I experienced personally that hospitality is a virtue not unknown to this dingy community. "The barbarians showed me no little kindness." Their politeness was not the poor sickly plant of drawing-rooms, all leaves and no fruit, but, rooted in the rich soil of a warm heart, threw out its vigorous shoots liberally. Many were the invitations given (for their courtesies went straight to the mark) to "the gentleman in the corner;" but all I wanted of them was to forget me, if possible, lest my presence might check their mirth or modify their manners, though the event proved that any anxiety of this kind was needless. One fine fellow early bawled out, in the pride of his heart, and he seemed to speak a general sentiment, "I drink no mixed liquors, to be sure; but I *love* my girl and my friend, and I don't care a — for no man!" Here I remembered that he held the first godlike *penchant* in common with the Jupiter of the ancients, to whom libations of wine were always offered *neat*. Nevertheless, the first article of his creed was rather an unhand-some glance at me, who happened to have something of that sort before me just then.

It has been remarked by sages (and I believe them for once in a way), that when a man cannot contain himself for joy, the turbulent jubilation of his heart does naturally break forth in song. A grim associate accordingly soon called out for one; each and all echoed the cry—"a song! a song!" one adding, by way of rider, "and let's have a jolly *coalbox* to it!" Incontinent a question arose in my mind, whether a toper's song be really worth anything without a chorus? I have often noticed its blissful effects in increasing good humour, and how mightily it favours the honest endeavours of the singer to please his hearers; for who can help applauding a chaunt, in the hubbub of which his own lungs have been so powerfully exerted? But before I could settle the question aye or no, *enter* the spouse of one of my associates—an actual *coalheaveress*—on an errand. Here was an opportunity for display of gallantry, and it was not lost. Their attentions were all on the alert in a moment. One poured out cordial gin for her; another made room, and insisted she should sit down; others filled both her hands with pewters of beer, till she was distracted with choices. She stood for one delicious moment, in pleased bewilderment and happy hesitation, as inactive, for the time, as the ass of the logicians between his two bundles of hay.

This interruption in the flow of affairs once past, "the fun grew

fast and furious." The first call was answered by my friend the wag, and his song was something about crossing "the wide ocean for to chase the buffalô." One reason why I have remembered the burden of it possibly is, because I thought at the time the idea expressed somewhat of the least patriotic; but the song that succeeded made an ample amends, by its redeeming anti-Gallican qualities. The latter was sung by a thick-set, brawny, husky-voiced, under-sized man, who looked as if he had been newly dug out of the bowels of the earth, and who performed the promise of *Bottom* to the very letter: "I will roar you as gently as any sucking-dove." The chorus is all I can recollect; it ran "some-how so"—

"For no rebel Frenchmen, sans-culottes,
Or sons of tyrants bold,
Shall conquer the English, Irish, or Scots,
Or land upon our co—o—oast,
Or land upon our coast."

A petty spirit of criticism might point out a slight dissociation of rhyme from reason in this nervous lyric; but, as it was given with befitting spirit, this trifling flaw was no ways perceptible at the time. "The harmony" (I use the established erroneous phrase) went on unceasingly, and much, very much, hot breath was turned into good melody, insomuch that I began to quake for my character at my lodgings; and, as a good name is better than riches, I determined to seize the first opportunity that offered of slipping away unperceived, not knowing but that the ceremony of taking leave here might be as tiresome as an ambassador's at court: and I had, moreover, now seen enough of the real nature of these excellent people to establish favourable ideas of them in my heart of hearts firmly and for ever. I could not miss observing that the landlord of the house was the common butt for the company to launch their bolts at; but his good-humour or his cunning turned off every shaft innocuous. So long as he had plenty of orders for liquor, he seemed to mind their rough jests not a fig. At last, indeed, being vigorously pressed on all sides, his temper did give way for a moment, but he, quickly gathering his wits about him again, with the policy of an old campaigner, diverted the attention of the enemy with a story. One man having quoted against him the common reproach of tapsters, that of using grooved chalk, so as to mark a double tale against their customers, "Now you mention chalk," said he, "I'll tell you how I got *done* the other day." And here he treated us to a rigmarolish story about a certain gentleman in his neighbourhood, who having permitted some bricklayers to run up a beer-score at his house, the debtor would not pay till he had inspected the original account; and that this last having been set down on the window-shutter of the tap-room, he was unreasonable enough to desire to retain it, that he might fix it on his file along with other *small* matters. "And so, gemmen," concluded the landlord, "I was *reg'larly* queered out o' my window-blinkers."

A cachinnatory explosion, which convinced me that till now I had never rightly known what the common phrase, a *horse-laugh*, meant, followed the recital of this abominable lie, under cover of which sly Boniface retreated; and I, thinking it a good chance for me, followed his example.

Before I quit this part of my subject, it may be as well to mention (as it involves a point of character, and, coupled with other traits, goes to prove the fallacy of Burke's assertion about the non-existence of a chivalric spirit among the moderns, at least in so far as regards these knights of the black diamond,) that two several quarrels arose in the course of the evening; for, after all, coalheavers are, in the main, frail men. Yet their differences were only the natural result of the workings of "humours which sometimes have their hour with every man," as Shakespeare very rightly observes: these were settled in the true old English way; there was no riot, no brawling; the parties, with their seconds, kindly bade the company good-b'ye for a moment, each deposited his tobacco-pipe upon the table, so as in some sort to represent his person *ad interim*, and there were fought two fistic duels in the

back-yard, with every circumstance of equity and scrupulous regularity of form. On their return, the visages of the heroes seemed a little worse for the rencontre, but the owners of them the best friends in the world, being fairly beaten into a loving *tenderness* and regard for each other; the general comfort was scarcely disturbed for a moment, and it was evident such things were common.

Most people you meet in your walks in the common thoroughfares of London glide, shuffle, or crawl onward, as if they conscientiously thought they had no manner of right to tread the earth but on sufferance. Not so our coalheaver. Mark how erect he walks! how firm a keel he presents to the vainly breasting human tide that comes rolling on with a show of opposition to his onward course! It is he, and he only, who preserves, in his gait and in his air, the self-sustained and conscious dignity of the first-created man, surrounded by an inferior creation. He gives the wall to none. That pliancy of temper, which is wont to make itself known by the waiving a point or renouncing a principle for others' advantage, in him has no place: he either knows it not, or else considers it a poor, mean-spirited, creeping baseness, altogether unworthy of his imitation, and best befitted with ineffable contempt. He neither dreads the contact of the baker, the Scylla of the metropolitan peripatetic; nor yet shuns the dire collision of the chimney-sweep, his Charybdis. Try to pass him as he walks leisurely on, making the solid earth ring with his bold tread, and you will experience more difficulties in the attempt than did that famous admiral, Bartholomew Diaz, when he first doubled the Cape of Storms. Or let us suppose that haply you allow your frail carcass to go full drive against his sturdiness, when lo!—in beautiful illustration of those doctrines in projectiles that relate to the concussion of moving bodies—you fly off at an angle "right slick" into the middle of the carriage-way; whence a question of some interest presently arises, whether you will please to be run over by a cab or an omnibus.—But to return. Who hesitates to make way for a coalheaver? As for their wagons—as *consecutive* a species of vehicles as a hurried wayfarer can be stopped by—every one knows they make way for themselves.

In conclusion, I would fain say something informing respecting the religious opinions of coalheavers. And as these our modern English *nigri fratres* do, by a rather curious coincidence, abound in the district that owes its name (Blackfriars) to rank Papists, its former possessors, it was much to be feared that the mantle of their erroneous belief also might have descended upon the shoulders of those who followed them in possession; yet, so far as my information therein goes, I can declare with safety that these, our much respected "black brethren," all are good men and true,—consequently, undoubting sons of mother Church.

I one Sunday met a party of my favourites in St. Paul's Cathedral. They seemed to view with becoming respect, and even awe, that splendid place—the proud fountain-head, as it were, of the hierarchal grandeur of Protestantism; and they listened to and observed, with apparently profound attention, the operation of that rather popish-looking piece of sacred machinery, cathedral service. Yet I must confess my favourable opinion of their grave looks was rather staggered by overhearing afterwards one of them say to his neighbour, casting a look all round the while, "My eyes, Tom, what lots o' COALS this here place would hold." Perhaps the observation was meant in honour.*

* When I was in America, in 1833, a party of tailors, of some town in the State of New York, paid a visit to the mighty Falls of Niagara. The great height of the banks there renders the descent into the chasm extremely difficult; but a person, having descended, may proceed to the base of the Falls; and a number of persons may walk in perfect safety a considerable distance between the precipice and the descending torrent: conversation is not much interrupted by the noise, which is not so great here as at a distance. A vapour or spray continually rises, however, which is the greatest inconvenience experienced in standing between the watery and rocky walls of this uncommon kind of cavern. Only one of the tailors ventured in: on his return, being eagerly asked by his less venturesome companions about the wonders he had seen, he replied, "Oh, it is a glorious place for sponging a coat in no time!"

FIRESIDE EDUCATION.*

SOME of our readers may be inclined to think that, at least, on the subject of Education, "of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh." Certainly, if books and lectures on education could make us a good and wise people, we ought to be, by this time, considerably advanced. But with all the writing, and all the lecturing, and all the *speaking*, we are a great way behind; and there are still not a few of us of the opinion of aunt Betsey in Miss Sedgwick's story—"I am sure we never had any such fuss at home; we grew up, and there was an end on't."

There is, too, a danger, in this education agitation, of directing too much or too exclusive an attention to the education of the young. Freely admitting that "the child is father of the man," we must not, at the same time, forget that our passions and feelings, as we advance in life, undergo fresh modification, enter into new combinations, and expose us to temptations unknown during other portions of our existence. The impetuous, ardent, ingenious, and sentimental youth, may slide into the middle-aged man, whose mind may be wholly divided between business and enjoyment, and whose appetites, if, in one sense, under more control, may also become more gross; and the middle-aged man may pass onward into the elderly gentleman, or the "lean and slippered pantaloon," full of himself, his family, and his family's importance, clinging to the world with a convulsive clutch, and counting every coin, as if silver were gold, and gold of unknown value. Let us, as we have more than once said, make education a great business of life; lay the foundation in infancy and youth, but rear the superstructure in manhood and age.

Many parents may say—what is the use of books? We know well enough what our duty is; we want only to be able to practise it. We know that we should preserve our parental dignity before our children; we know that they are quick-sighted, and easily detect inconsistencies in our characters; we know and we feel the vast importance of example in giving effect to precept. But we, who have been badly educated ourselves, how are we to overrule the infirmities of our own tempers? Are domestic cares never to disturb our equanimity? Is disease never to make us irritable? Is business never to spread a gloom over our hearts and faces? Can we cast out our plaguy thoughts, as we cast off our cloaks, and make the *FIRESIDE* *always* a scene of enjoyment, and encircle it with faces perpetually smiling? If books on *FIRESIDE EDUCATION* cannot do all that, of what use are they?

"Fair and softly," as John Gilpin cried—though we hope we shall be unlike him in *not* "crying in vain." Let parents do the best they can; aim high, and if you do not hit your object, there is less chance of your falling too far below it. In this respect, books are of great use. The very feeling of regret which they excite in the reader's mind, at his falling so far below a standard, is of itself beneficial. What, in fact, is all morality, and all genuine imaginative creation, but a higher standard than man can reach? Yet how powerfully does the influence of this high standard operate on the mind! It lifts up human nature; dignifies our actions, which otherwise would sink far below their own level; and makes us feel ourselves to be something more than reasoning animals. Give us, therefore, we say, books on education. If they are not pernicious, they must be all more or less useful; they suggest the idea of want and deficiency; they stimulate to exertion, even in spite of failure; and they raise the standard of education in the public mind.

To such of our readers as are not tired of the subject—and none can be tired of it who feel its true importance; to those who are willing to have iteration and re-iteration—"line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little"—we would recommend Mr. Goodrich's "*Fireside Education*." It is neither learned nor recondite—affects neither philosophy nor profundity. It is a plain book, addressed to plain people, written in a lively, level style, adapted to the capacities of "the many." It is written by the well-known American author, whose "*Peter Parley's Tales*," addressed to the young, have made him popular on both sides of the Atlantic; and though a critic may detect marks of haste in getting up the book, and there are not a few things in it to which we would not be quite disposed to yield our assent, it is, on the whole, very admirably adapted for its purpose, and may be read by parents with much profit. The style is a sort of imitation of those other American books, many of which have appeared

* *Fireside Education*. By S. G. Goodrich, author of "*Peter Parley's Tales*." London: Smith, 1839.

of late years—take, for instance, Abbott's Young Christian, and Todd's Student's Manual—in which precept is mingled with anecdote, and the nail of a serious admonition is driven home by a striking or startling story. These kind of books are admirably adapted for the American moral atmosphere; the busy people, incessantly "going ahead," have but little time to spare, and if they read grave admonitory works, they must be such as they can read while they run. Nor are they ill adapted for England, as large editions of them reprinted in this country can testify.

The preface to "Fireside Education," is, perhaps, one of the best things in the book. Thus commences "Peter Parley":—

"In the autumn of 1837, there was an assembly in the State-house at Boston, which presented two conditions of society. Among a crowd, consisting of the pale-faced race, were a number of red warriors from the West. They were the chiefs of their tribes, the picked men of their several nations; the brave of the battle-field, the orator and sage of the council. In reply to an address from the chief magistrate of the commonwealth, several of them made speeches. But how narrow was their range of thought; how few their ideas; how slight their knowledge; how feeble their grasp of intellect! They were indeed powerful in limb, but they had evidently the imperfect and limited comprehension of children. As animals, they were athletic, sinewy, and active; but as men, they had a coarse and revolting aspect. If you looked into their countenances as an index to the mind, you looked in vain for any trace of those refined emotions which belong to civilised man. It is frightful to gaze into the human face and see only the sinister stare of a wild animal. The eye of a cultivated human being is full of depth and meaning: if you read it attentively, it seems, like a mirror, to reveal the inward world of thought and feeling, as the bosom of the smooth lake reflects the image of the earth around and heaven above. But the eye of these savages, like that of the wolf or the tiger, though bright and glassy, had no such depth of expression, and seemed only to manifest a wary attention to visible objects and the passing scene. It bespoke no inward working, as if the mind were busy in weaving its woof of reflection, and unfolded no emotion, as if some seal were broken and a new page of revelation opened on the soul. It seemed indeed but a watchful sentinel to mark outward things, not a mirror imaging forth a spirit within.

"Among the savages, in the scene I have described, was the wife of the chief; but she was a subdued and downcast slave, her humble place being ever in the rear of the train. On her shone no smile from the master, no gentleness from the husband, no tenderness from the father. His bronzed features could not reveal sentiments like these, for the bosom within was a stranger to them.

"Such were the master-spirits of the savage race. Compare them with the individual who addressed them on the occasion in behalf of the pale-faces, and consider the difference between savage and civilised man. Consider the compass of thought, the vastness of knowledge, the power of combination, the richness of fancy, the depth, variety, and refinement of sentiment, which belong to one, and the narrowness of mind, the poverty of soul, which characterise the other. And what is the mighty magic which thus makes men to differ?

"The easy answer to this interrogation is offered in a single word—**EDUCATION**. I know indeed that in common use this only means the instruction given at our seminaries. We speak of an English education, a liberal education, a fashionable education. In these cases, the word has a restricted and technical signification, and includes little more than instruction in certain arts and certain branches of knowledge. The learned politician who gave as a toast on some public occasion, 'Education, or the three R's, Reading, Riting, and Rithmetic,' interpreted the word according to this popular acceptation. It has, however, a more enlarged sense, and legitimately includes all those influences which go to unfold the faculties of man or determine human character. It is in this wide sense that education may be offered as explaining the difference between savage and civilised man. It is in this sense that education is the fashioner of the great human family, including every individual of the race. It is in this sense that man is ever the subject of education, from the cradle to the grave. It is in this sense that it has a force almost realising the heathen notions of destiny. We should therefore regard seminary instruction merely as a branch of education, not as the whole system; a link, but not the entire chain. In the following pages, I propose to consider the subject in this more extended view, and shall endeavour to show that, in limiting our notions of education to mere school tuition, we overlook important, perhaps the most

important, instruments of instruction; neglect the most efficient means of moulding human character; and thus, by a common error, do infinite injury to individuals and society at large. In pursuing this course, I shall bestow particular attention upon the chief engine by which character is formed—the Fireside Seminary. In connexion with this subject, I shall have occasion to speak particularly of the common school, the great auxiliary of the fireside, and shall endeavour to suggest some means of rendering it more efficient in accomplishing its legitimate ends.

"The theory which I present to the reader in the following pages is briefly this: man comes into existence marked by his Creator as the subject of a peculiar design, which is, that he shall reach the perfection of his being through education. This point I illustrate by comparisons, showing that while all the animal races are incapable of being benefited by instruction, and obtain their perfection without it, man can only receive the full development of his physical, intellectual, and moral faculties through a process of teaching and training."

Having thus allowed Mr. Goodrich to state his own object, we will only string a few of his anecdotes together, to show the lively manner in which he illustrates his advice and opinions.

A RAM'S-HORN TEACHER.

"I have heard of a man who contended, that learning in a teacher was a positive hindrance to success. He was accustomed to illustrate his opinions in the following manner: 'When the prophet desired to blow down the walls of Jericho, he did not take a brass trumpet or a polished French horn; but he took a ram's horn, a plain natural ram's horn, just as it grew. And so if you desire to overturn the Jericho of ignorance, you must not take a college-leant gentleman, but a plain natural, ram's-horn sort of a man, like me.'"

HORSE-HAIR JUSTICE.

"I once knew a boy, in the olden days of Webster's Grammar, who found this definition in his book: 'A noun is the name of a thing, as horse, hair, justice.' But he chanced to misconceive it, and read it thus: 'A noun is the name of a thing, as horse-hair justice.' He was of a reflecting turn, and long he pondered over the wonderful mysteries of a noun. But in vain; he could not make it out. His father was a justice of the peace, and one day, when the boy went home, the old gentleman was holding a justice's court. There he sat in state among a crowd of people, on an old-fashioned horse-hair settee. A new light now broke in upon our young hero's mind. 'My father,' said he mentally, 'is a horse-hair justice, and therefore a noun!'"

SMART RETORTS.

"Some children display an early relish for wit or humour. I have heard of a little boy, who, on seeing a man at work white-washing a wall, was observed to smile. 'Why do you smile?' said a by-stander. 'Don't you see,' said the boy, 'that he is lathering the wall, and when he has done I suppose he will shave it?' Other children go into the habit of taking sound for sense, and this, if indulged, leads to ridiculous absurdities. I recollect a lad at school who in this way became a sort of oracle, and could readily answer the profoundest questions. One of his companions happening to meet with the word *fortification*, asked him the meaning of it. 'Fortification,' said the oracle, 'fortification—why it's two twentyfications, to be sure.'

"An early turn for sarcastic retort is manifested by some children. I once heard of a boy, who, being rebuked by a clergyman for neglecting to go to church, replied, that he would go if he could be permitted to change his seat. 'But why do you wish to change your seat?' said the minister. 'You see,' said the boy, 'I sit over the opposite side of the meeting-house, and between me and you there's Judy Vickers and Mary Staples, and half-a-dozen other women, with their mouths wide open, and they get all the best of the sermon, and when it comes to me it's pretty poor stuff.'"

TEMPERATE TOO MUCH.

The following is, to our minds, rather too American and extreme in its temperate notions:—'Tea and coffee should be totally withheld from children under ten years old. The former should never be taken, unless it is weak, before the age of twenty. Green tea is a strong stimulant, and can never be taken without injurious consequences by some persons. Black tea is much safer; mixed with green it is very palatable, and has no bad effects upon persons arrived at mature age. Coffee is a strong narcotic, and operates differently on different persons. To some, it is a poison, producing nausea or great nervous irritability: others appear to

take it without injury. But it is never safe for children or young persons. Even if it produces no immediate, visible evil, it is sure to lay the foundation of after mischief. It weakens the digestive energy of the stomach, and soon or late begets dyspepsy and a perpetual craving for active stimuli. Early coffee drinking, in a climate like ours, subject to extremes and sudden changes, will often result in habitual drunkenness. That which has been imagined to be hereditary predisposition to intemperance, has frequently been nothing more than the craving of a diseased stomach, engendered under a mother's eye and with a mother's approbation, by the early drinking of strong tea or strong coffee."

CONTRAST, OR A COUPLE OF NEW ENGLAND PICTURES.

"Captain Wideopen's house stands on a broad street, that runs for a mile in length through the village of Decay. It is an old farm-house, one story high, with its gable end to the street. In front of the house is the wood pile, spread out so as to cover a rood of ground. As you pass by, the barn, cow-house, and yard, with its deep morass of manure in high flavour, salute the eye and nose. The pig-pen, wide open and in full view, is between the house and barn. In a warm day the congregation of vapours is overwhelming. The well, the wash-shed, the wood-shed, all are in full view to the passers by. The space around the front door is defiled by the pigs, who root and grunt there by day, and by the geese, who roost there by night.

"Thus all the unsightly and unseemly objects are spread out to view, and the scene is embellished by the addition of broken sleighs, sleds, ploughs, wagons, carts, old posts, &c. There lies a shapeless heap of stones; yonder is a gate with one hinge, which will soon be broken for want of care. Here is a pair of bars thrown down; there the stone wall has tumbled over!

"Such is the scene presented by the residence of a wealthy, respectable farmer in New England; and I am sorry to say that that there are hundreds, nay thousands, like it in New England!—ay, in New England! Not that every village is a Decay, or every farmer a Wideopen. No! some of our villages are delightful, and some of our country people are patters of good order and neatness. But I am speaking of those who are not so. And if these pages should come into the hands of any person, in New England or out of it, who is ignorant of the advantages of neatness and order, let me urge upon him, as worthy of immediate attention, the following remarks, drawn from observation and experience.

"1. A man, whose house, like Capt. Wideopen's, is out-of-doors marked by disorder, confusion, and want of cleanliness, is generally the same in-doors.

"2. Where there is confusion and want of neatness, though there may be plenty of bread, butter, milk, cheese, fuel, clothing, and other necessities, there is little comfort, little thrift, little good-nature, little kindness, little religion, little beauty, little peace or happiness.

"3. Children brought up in the midst of confusion and want of cleanliness, are likely to be low, vulgar, and vicious in their tastes, and in their character. Let fathers and mothers consider that, if they bring up their children in this way, they are schooling them to be drunkards, profane, mean, base, wicked, and despised; that the schooling of home is the most lasting of all schooling; that the ferule of the schoolmaster cannot efface what the father and mother have taught; that the preacher cannot destroy the die stamped upon the young heart at home by parental example! Look to this, ye fathers and mothers, and if for your own sakes ye are indifferent to neatness and order, for the sake of the young immediately around you be no longer so!

"4. There is a constant tendency, in the want of order and neatness, to cause ruin and waste; consequently a man who, like Capt. Wideopen, allows things to go on in this way, generally gets poorer and poorer, till at length mortgages, embarrassment, debt, losses, and the law, bring him to poverty.

"5. Neatness and good order contribute to health, wealth, and happiness; while opposite habits tend to disease, misery, poverty, vice, and short life.

"Let us now turn to another scene. The village of Thrivewell is also a New England village, and is remarkable for its pleasant, cheerful aspect. Every person who rides through it is delighted; and the place has such a reputation, that the land is worth more, and the houses will sell for more, than in almost any other place of the kind you can name. And this arises from the good taste, neatness, and order, which characterise the inhabitants. I will give you a sketch of the house belonging to Captain John Pepperidge; a careful, correct, upright man, who has risen from

poverty to ease and competence, by industry, economy, and prudence.

"His house stands three or four rods back from the street; the front yard is green, grassy, and decorated with handsome trees. The wood-pile is fenced in; the barn-yard, pig-pen, &c., are also tidily fenced. It is a favourite proverb with Pepperidge that there *should be a place for everything, and that everything should be in its place.* This is his great maxim; and he not only observes it himself, but he requires every man, woman, and child about him to observe it also. He says it saves him one hundred dollars a year.

"He has other rules, such as *a stitch in time saves nine*: thus, as soon as a stone falls off the wall, he puts it up; when a rail gets out of the fence, he replaces it; when a gate is broken, it is forthwith repaired; if a clapboard is loose, a nail clenches it. Thus, matters are kept tight and tidy. On a wet day, instead of going to the tavern, he spends the time in making little repairs. At odd moments of leisure, he sets out trees and shrubs; thus, year by year, beautifying his place, and rendering it not only more comfortable, but also worth more money, in case he should ever desire to sell it.

"Captain Pepperidge takes great pleasure, and perhaps a little innocent pride, in his place, though, to say the truth, it is by no means costly. He loves better to spend his time in making it more convenient and pleasant, in setting out trees, improving the grounds, mending the fences, &c., than in going about to talk politics, or gossip upon other people's business, or in haunting a tavern bar-room. In short, his home is comfortable, pleasant, delightful. It is neat and orderly, inside and out. And he has made it so; though his wife, having happily caught the influence of his example, contributes her share to the good work. His children are well dressed, well educated, well behaved. Can such a man be a drunkard? Can he be vicious? Can he be wicked? Who has so good a chance of health, wealth, and happiness? Who so likely to be respected by his neighbours? Who so likely to do good by his influence and example? Come, Captain Wideopen, I pray you, and learn a lesson of farmer Pepperidge!

"Let us look at the practical effect of Pepperidge's example. Formerly the village of Thrivewell was called Uneasy Swamp, and was inhabited by a set of people becoming the name. They were poor, ignorant, idle, and uneasy. They were jealous of all rich people, and considered the unequal distribution of property a dreadful evil. They were equally jealous of the wise, and considered the unequal distribution of knowledge a nuisance to be abated. They were also jealous of the virtuous, and hated nothing so much as a just and honest man. In short, they were, half a century ago, where some conceited but ignorant and ill-minded people are now, willing to level every body and thing to their own standard. If a candidate for office was up, who addressed their prejudices, and coaxed them with promises, though meaning to cheat them, he was the man for them. If he was known to be mean, slippery, and unprincipled, fellow-feeling seemed to render them kind, and the more ardently they espoused his cause. Such was Uneasy Swamp; a place which may have its images still in some parts of the country."

ROMAN PROSPERITY.

If a man were called on to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom. The labours of these monarchs were overpaid by the immense reward that inseparably waited on their success,—by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors. A just but melancholy reflection embittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyment. They must often have recollected the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of a single man.

Gibbon.

TRAVELS IN PALESTINE IN 1838.

EDWARD ROBINSON, D.D., Professor of Biblical Literature in the New York Theological Seminary, a gentleman whose character as a scholar and biblical critic stands very high, visited Palestine in 1838. His mind was well prepared by previous study for the scene of his travels; and his object in visiting the country, was to investigate the antiquities of the Holy Land, and to endeavour to throw fresh light on the subject of scriptural illustration. Such of our readers as take an interest in this matter, are well aware that the investigations of recent travellers have done much to clear up what was obscure and doubtful; that scriptural facts, incidents, and allusions, have either been strengthened, or placed in an entirely different position; and that many texts which hitherto, from our ignorance of the manners of the East, and of the topography of the Holy Land, have been absurdly or ludicrously interpreted, and their interpretations handed down, without question or dispute, from father to son, are now expounded in a manner satisfactory to all intelligent and inquiring minds.

But not alone to the biblical student are travels in Palestine of interest. Can even the general reader—he whose circumstances or education have prevented him from acquiring that preliminary knowledge which would enable him to enjoy such travels as those of Professor Robinson—can even he be indifferent to that land and that city, the objects of interest or of veneration to Christian, Jew, and Mohammedan? “Phœnicia and Palestine,” says Gibbon, “will for ever live in the memory of mankind; since America, as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other.” Yet Phœnicia occupied but a narrow strip of rocky coast; and its neighbour, Palestine, was far more fertile, certainly, but not much larger, than Wales. As, however, there may be some of our readers indifferent, or, at least, not disposed to understand and enjoy the illustrative scriptural researches of Professor Robinson, we will, instead of reprinting the “brief report” of his travels which we find in the “American Biblical Repository,” give only an abstract or abridgment.

“The journey,” says Professor Robinson, “of which the following is a brief account, had entered into all my plans of life for the last fifteen years. So long ago as 1832, it was the subject of conversation between myself and the Rev. Eli Smith, then on a visit to the United States; and the same general plan of the journey was then marked out, which we have been permitted during the present year to execute. I count it fortunate for myself and for the interests of Biblical science, that I was thus able to secure the company of one, who, by his familiar and accurate knowledge of the Arabic language, by his experience as a traveller in Persia and Armenia, and by his acquaintance with the people of Syria, was so well qualified to remove the difficulties and overcome the obstacles usually attendant upon oriental travel.

“I embarked at Trieste Dec. 1, 1837; and after spending a fortnight at Athens, proceeded to Alexandria and Cairo. The months of January and February, 1838, were mostly spent in a voyage up the Nile as far as Thebes. Returning to Cairo in the last days of February, I found Mr. Smith just arrived; and we now entered on the preparations necessary for our long journey through the desert. We visited meanwhile the pyramids of Gizeh, the earliest and most vast of all human monuments, and were ready to set off on our journey on the 12th of March.

“It had been our wish to take a somewhat circuitous route from Cairo to Suez, descending along the eastern branch of the Nile as far as the province Sharkiyeh, and thence along the valley of the ancient canal to the head of the Gulf of Suez. But our time was limited, and we were compelled to take the usual and shortest route, that of Ankebiyeh, the same which Burckhardt travelled in 1816. Our party consisted of three Americans, two Egyptian servants, and five Arabs of the Towara, who have the exclusive right of conducting travellers from Egypt to Mount Sinai. They were the owners of the nine camels we had hired, and were all under the direction of Besharah our guide, one of the men who accompanied Laborde. Just without the city, near the splendid but now neglected tombs of the Kalifs, we halted for a time, to adjust the loads of the camels for the journey, which could not so well be done in the narrow streets of the city. Then we launched forth into the desert; and travelling onward until darkness overtook us, we pitched our tent for the night in a shallow wady. This term, in the desert, means a shallow bed, through which the waters of the rainy season are carried off; while in uneven or mountainous regions, it is also applied to the deepest and broadest valleys. It was a new and exciting feeling, to find ourselves thus alone in the midst of the desert, in the true style of oriental travel;

carrying with us our *house*, our provisions, and our supply of water for many days, and surrounded by camels and the wild sons of the desert, in a region where the eye could find nought to rest upon but dreary desolation. It was a scene which had often taken possession of my youthful imagination, but which I had not dared to hope would ever be realised.”

Crossing the sandy desert of Suez, they arrived at the town on the fourth day from Cairo: and here the travellers set themselves to examine the circumstances under which the Children of Israel crossed the Red Sea more than three thousand years ago. “Our minds were satisfied, in general, that the Israelites must have journeyed from the land of Goshen to the Red Sea, along the valley of the ancient canal, this being the only route on which they could obtain water; and, also, that they must have passed through the sea at or near Suez, directly from the great desert plain which extends for ten or twelve miles west and north behind the city. Of course it is impossible to fix the exact point of their passage; but it may not improbably have taken place lower down and near the edge of the present shoals, where even now, at very low tides, the Arabs sometimes wade across. It must be remembered, that the miracle was wrought through the instrumentality of a strong east (or N.E.) wind, which here would act directly to drive out the waters; but would not so act in any other part of the gulf. There are also great difficulties connected with the rapid passage of so great a multitude through the sea at any point where it is wider.

“Leaving Suez late the next day, we took our course around the head of the gulf, the better to observe the features of the country. We pitched our tent at night over against Suez, but somewhat lower down, not far from the place where the Israelites probably came out upon the eastern shore. Here, at our evening devotions, and near the spot where it was composed and first sung, we read and felt in its full force, the magnificent triumphal song of Moses: ‘The Lord hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he hath thrown into the sea!’”

They approached the “central granite mountains of Sinai” by an unusual route; and were surprised and delighted to find themselves “crossing the whole length of a fine plain, from the southern end of which that part of Sinai now called Horeb rises perpendicularly in dark and frowning majesty. This plain is over two miles in length, and nearly two-thirds of a mile broad, sprinkled with tufts of herbs and shrubs, like the wadys of the desert. It is wholly enclosed by dark granite mountains—stern, naked, splintered peaks and ridges, from 1,000 to 1,500 feet high. On the east of Horeb a deep and very narrow valley runs in like a cleft, as if in continuation of the S.E. corner of the plain. In this stands the convent, at the distance of a mile from the plain; and the deep verdure of its fruit-trees and cypresses is seen as the traveller approaches—an oasis of beauty amid scenes of the sternest desolation.

“The plain above mentioned is in all probability the spot where the congregation of Israel were assembled to receive the law; and the mountain impending over it, the present Horeb, was the scene of the awful phenomena in which the law was given. As to the present summit of Sinai, there is little reason to suppose that it had any connection with the giving of the law, and still less the higher peaks of St. Catherine. I know not when I have felt a thrill of stronger emotion, than when, in first crossing the plain, the dark precipices of Horeb rising in solemn grandeur before us, I became aware of the entire adaptedness of the scene to the purposes for which it was chosen by the great Hebrew legislator.

“We were kindly received at the convent, after being hoisted to its narrow entrance, and remained there five days, visiting in the interval the summits of Sinai, Horeb, and St. Catherine. As my companion could speak modern Greek with some fluency, we found peculiar favour in the eyes of the good old Superior, to whom the Arabic was almost an unknown tongue. He carried his civility so far, as to accompany us to the top of Sinai and Horeb; but the next day his fervour quailed before the more arduous task of ascending Mount St. Catherine; and he preferred waiting our return at the convent El-Erbayin, where we had lodged.”

Quitting the hospitable convent of St. Catherine, they journeyed to Akabah, which they left “late in the afternoon of April 5th, and recrossing the plain of Wady Araba, began to ascend the western mountains by the great Hadj or ‘pilgrim’ route. We soon encamped for the night; and from this point we had seven long days’ journey to Hebron. The ascent afterward is steep and difficult. The way is almost literally strewn with the bones of camels, and skirted by the graves of pilgrims; all testifying to the difficulty of the pass. On arriving at the top of the pass, we soon

came out upon the great plateau of the Western desert, and found ourselves higher than the mountain peaks which we had seen from below, and through which we had just ascended. Not far from the top of the pass we left the Hadj route, and turning off in a direction about N.N.W., we launched forth again into 'the great and terrible wilderness.'

"For the first two days the general character of this desert was similar to that between Cairo and Suez,—a vast unbounded plain, a hard gravelly soil, irregular ridges of limestone hills in various directions, the mirage, and especially the wadis or water-courses. All our Arabs gave to this part of the desert the name Et-Tih, the desert of wandering."

"Crossing a more sandy portion of the desert, we had our first specimen of the Simhm, or south wind of the desert. It came over us with violence like the glow of an oven, and filled the air with fine particles of dust and sand, so as to obscure the sun, and render it difficult to see objects only a few rods distant. This continued for about four hours. We encamped in the Wady Ruheibeh, where we had never heard of ruins. But on ascending the hill on our left, we discovered the remains of a city not much less than two miles in circuit. The houses had been mostly built of hewn stone; there were several public buildings, and many cisterns. But the whole is now thrown together in unutterable confusion; and it would seem as if the city had been suddenly overthrown by some tremendous earthquake. What ancient city this can have been, I have not yet been able to learn. The Arabic name suggests the Rehoboth of scripture, the name of one of Isaac's wells (Gen. xxvi. 22); but the other circumstances do not correspond."

"The Wady Ruheibeh opens out towards the north into a fine plain, covered with grass, and herbs, and bushes; in crossing which our ears were regaled with the carols of the lark and the song of the nightingale, all indicating our approach to a more fertile region. After crossing another elevated plateau, the character of the surface was again changed. We came upon an open rolling country; all around were swelling hills, covered in ordinary seasons with grass and rich pasture, though now arid and parched with drought. We now came to Wady Seba; and on the north side of its water-course, we had the gratification of discovering (April 12th) the site of ancient Beersheba, the celebrated border city of Palestine, still bearing in Arabic the name of Bir Seba. Near the water-course are two circular wells of excellent water, more than forty feet deep. They are both surrounded with drinking-troughs of stone for the use of camels and flocks; such as doubtless were used of old for the flocks which then fed on the adjacent hills.—Ascending the low hills north of the wells, we found them strewn with the ruins of former habitations, the foundations of which are distinctly to be traced. These ruins extend over a space half a mile long by a quarter of a mile broad.—Here then is the place where Abraham and Isaac and Jacob often lived! Here Samuel made his sons judges; and from here Elijah wandered out into the southern desert, and sat down under the Rethem, or shrub of broom, just as our Arabs sat down under it every day and every night! Over these swelling hills, the flocks of the patriarch roved by thousands;—we now found only a few camels, asses, and goats!

"We arrived at Hebron. Here the 'pool' over which David hung up the assassins of Ishbosheth still remains, and fixes the site of the ancient city. The cave of Macphelah cannot well have been within the city, and therefore the present mosque cannot cover its site. We could not but notice the fertility of the surrounding valleys, full of fields of grain, and of vineyards yielding the largest and finest clusters of all Palestine; and likewise the rich pasturage of the hills, over which were scattered numerous flocks and herds. Yet, to a careless observer, the country in general can only appear sterile; for the limestone rocks everywhere come out upon the surface, and are strewn over it in large masses, to such a degree, that a more stony or rocky region is rarely to be seen."

"We took the direct road to Jerusalem. It is laid with stones in many places, and is doubtless the ancient road, which patriarchs and kings of old have often trod. But it is only a path for beasts; no wheels have ever passed there. We hurried onward, and reached the Holy City at sunset, April 14th, just before the closing of the gates on the evening before Easter Sunday."

"The feelings of the Christian traveller on approaching Jerusalem for the first time, can be better conceived than described. Mine were strongly excited. Before us, as we approached, lay Zion, the Mount of Olives, the vales of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat, and other objects of the deepest interest. I beheld them now with

my own eyes; they all seemed familiar to me, as if the realization of a former dream; and it was almost a painful interruption when my companion, with the kindest motives, began to point out and name the different objects in view."

"In approaching Jerusalem from Hebron, I was struck with the very rapid descent of the Valley of Hinnom, and the great depth of the Vale of Jehoshaphat, into which the former opens. In the city itself I was prepared, from the descriptions of most travellers, to find the houses miserable, the streets filthy, and the population squalid. But in all these respects I was agreeably disappointed. The houses are better built, and the streets cleaner, than those of Alexandria, Smyrna, or Constantinople. The hills and valleys which marked the different quarters of the ancient city, are still distinctly visible."

After examining the antiquities of Jerusalem, the travellers set out on excursions through Palestine. They were singularly fortunate. "When we arrived at Jerusalem, war was raging between the Druses and the forces of the Pasha. The city was full of rumours; no one knew where Ibrahim Pasha was; and it was said his troops had been beaten. In this state of things the unquiet spirits of the land began to rouse themselves; several murders and robberies were committed on pilgrims and travelling merchants, and for a time it was doubtful whether we should be able to travel at all in the country without an armed guard. But soon the certain news arrived that Ibrahim was at Damascus, and had defeated the Druses. After this all was again still, and we travelled through the length and breadth of the land without fear or accident—indeed with the same feeling of security as in England or Germany."

"As if we were to have a specimen of all the evils of the oriental world, in a few days after our arrival in the Holy City the plague broke out—at first doubtfully, then decidedly, though mildly. Other travellers left the city immediately; and some who were on their way thither turned back. We continued our investigations without interruption, and a kind Providence preserved us from the danger. On the 19th of May the city was shut up, and none permitted to go out; we had left it two days before on a long excursion."

"Indeed, during the whole journey, although surrounded by war, pestilence, and quarantines, we were enabled to pass through them all without harm or hindrance—without being detained from these causes even for an hour."

One of their excursions was from Jerusalem to Carmel and the Jordan. "A visit to Jericho and the Jordan is usually represented as attended with more danger than perhaps any other part of Palestine; and most travellers, therefore, take with them a guard furnished by the governor of Jerusalem. But as the soldiers of the government would have been only objects of hatred to the unquiet Arabs whom we might chance to fall in with, we preferred to employ as guards and guides some of the Arabs who live on the west side of the Dead Sea, who, having formerly been themselves robbers, were well known to all the Arabs in the regions we intended to visit. We engaged the Shekh of the Tammra with four of his men, and had every reason to be satisfied with their fidelity and intelligence."

"The excursion on which we were now entering occupied eight days. We left Jerusalem on the 8th of May, again on horseback, and proceeded by way of Bethlehem, and so along the aqueduct, to Solomon's pools; and thence to the Frank mountain. This is a steep and lofty hill S.E. of Bethlehem, having the form of a truncated cone, and rising high above all the hills and ridges of the eastern slope. On its top are the remains of ancient fortifications, and at its base on the north side are traces of an ancient town, probably Herodium built by Herod the Great, who also was buried there. Hence we turned S.W. towards Tekoa, but pitched our tent for the night near the encampment of our Arabs. Here we had an opportunity of seeing the housekeeping of the desert. The grinding at the mill, the kneading and baking of bread, the care of the dairy, the churning of the milk—all was carried on by the women in the open tents; and it was the more interesting to us, as finely illustrating the frequent scriptural allusions to pastoral life."

At Carmel the travellers read "the story of David and Nabal, and were deeply struck with the truth of the biblical descriptions of manners and customs almost literally and identically the same as they exist at the present day."

"From Carmel our course lay directly east, to Ain Jiddi, the ancient Engeddi, on the western shore of the Dead Sea. The way was a continual descent, sometimes by steep passes, and again crossing deep wadis. As we approached the sea, the region became more desert and desolate than ever. At every moment,

we expected to arrive at the shore of the sea, and on the level of its waters; but the way at every step seemed longer and longer. At length, after a ride of seven hours, we came to the brow of the pass of Engeddi. Turning aside to what seemed a small knoll on our right, we found ourselves on the summit of a precipitous cliff, overhanging Engeddi and the sea, at least 1500 feet above its waters. The Dead Sea lay before us in its vast deep chasm, shut in on both sides by precipitous mountains; and, with its low projecting points and flat border towards the south, resembling much a long winding bay, or the estuary of a large river, when the tide is out, and the shoals left dry. We descended to the shore by a pass more steep, rugged, and difficult, than is to be found among the Alps, and pitched our tent near the fine large fountain which bursts out upon a narrow terrace, still 400 feet above the sea. The water of the fountain is beautifully transparent; but its temperature is 81° of Fahrenheit, or 20° of Reaumur.

"The whole descent below the fountain was apparently once terraced for gardens, and the ruins of a town are seen on the right. The whole slope is still covered with trees and shrubs of a more southern clime; among them we found the *ôcher*, the fruit of which corresponds best to the ancient descriptions of the apples of Sodom. Nothing is needed but tillage to render this a most prolific spot. The soil is rich, the heat great, and the water abundant.—The approach to the sea is here over a bank of pebbles, several feet higher than the level of the water, as we saw it. The water of the sea is not entirely transparent; but objects seen through it appear as if seen through oil. It is most intensely salt and bitter, and is exceedingly buoyant. The phenomena around the sea are such as might be expected from the nature of its waters and the character of the region round about, for the most part a naked, dreary desert; but, although we were for several days in its vicinity, we perceived no noisome smell and no pestiferous vapour arising from its waters. Of birds we saw many. Indeed, at early dawn, the trees, and rocks, and air, were full of the carols of the lark, the cheerful whistle of the quail, the call of the partridge, and the warbling of innumerable songsters; while birds of prey were soaring and screaming in front of the cliffs above.

"Next morning we were compelled to reascend the pass, in order to proceed northward along the shelving table-land above, the projecting cliffs cutting off all passage below along the water. At night we encamped again on a cliff 1,000 feet above the sea, overhanging the fountain Turabeh, which is below on the shore. From this point both ends of the sea were visible. Pigeons were shooting over its surface, and, in the reeds around the brackish fountain below, frogs were merrily croaking. The scene of this evening was most romantic; the full moon rose in splendour over the eastern mountains, and poured a flood of silvery light into the deep, dark chasm below. Our Arabs were sleeping around us; only the tall pensive figure of the Sheikh was seen sitting before the door of the tent, his eyes intently fixed upon us as we wrote. From various data, I judged the length of the sea to be about fifty miles: its breadth cannot exceed ten or twelve miles.

"We continued our course next day, descending again by a difficult pass; and after travelling for several hours along the shore and over the plain, the soil of which is here in many parts like ashes, we arrived at the lower fords of the Jordan—a deep turbid stream with a still but strong current. The river is here from 80 to 100 feet broad, winding its way through a cane-brake or jungle, which renders it inaccessible except in spots. It was now the time of wheat harvest in the valley, and we found the river, as of old, overflowing the banks of its ordinary channel, as was the case when the Israelites approached it, Josh. ch. iii."

Our space precludes us from giving more of these interesting "notes" of travels; but we may mention that, on the 17th of May, they started on an excursion to Petra, which occupied them twenty-three days; two days after they started, Jerusalem was shut up on account of the plague. On their return from this long journey, they found the city still shut up; "and therefore pitched our tent in the Olive-grove north of the city, before the Damascus gate. Here we were joined by our travelling companion and Mr. Lanneau, who had performed their quarantine of seven days. Our other friends held communication with us from the wall, and once came out to meet us under the charge of a *guardiano* or health-officer.

"If my feelings were strongly excited on first entering the Holy City, they were hardly less so on leaving it for the last time. As we had formerly approached repeating continually the salutation of the Psalmist: 'Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces;' so now we could not but add: 'For our brethren and companions' sakes we will now say, Peace be within thee!'

Her palaces indeed are long since levelled to the ground, and the haughty Moslem now treads her glory in the dust! Yet as we turned to look again from the high ground north of the city, I could not but exclaim: 'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the great King!' One long, last look, and then turning away I bade those sacred hills farewell for ever!"

They left Jerusalem on the 13th of June; arrived at Beirut on the 26th; and thence returned to Western Europe by Alexandria, Smyrna, Constantinople, and so across the Black Sea, and up the Danube to Vienna.

FROZEN WELLS.

WE find the following in the last number of Silliman's "American Journal of Science and Arts."

TO PROFESSOR SILLIMAN,—Dear Sir,—There is a well near this village, which has drawn the attention of the scientific and curious for many years, but the phenomena which happen in it have never yet been explained. I have taken some pains to ascertain the facts, and now communicate them to you, in hopes of hearing a scientific exposition of this apparent contradiction of nature's laws.

The well is excavated on a table of land, elevated about thirty feet above the bed of the Susquehanna River, and distant from it three-fourths of a mile. The depth of the well, from the surface to the bottom, is said to be seventy-seven feet; but for four or five months in the year, the surface of the water is frozen so solid as to be entirely useless to the inhabitants. On the twenty-third of the present month, in company with a friend, I measured the depth, and found it to be sixty-one feet from the surface of the earth to the ice which covers the water in the well, and this ice we found it impossible to break with a heavy iron weight attached to a rope. The sides of the well are nearly covered with masses of ice, which increasing in the descent, leave but about a foot space (in diameter) at the bottom. A thermometer let down to the bottom, sunk 38° in fifteen minutes, being 68° in the sun, and 30° at the bottom of the well. The well has been dug twenty-one years, and I am informed by a very credible person, who assisted in the excavation, that a man could not endure to work in it more than two hours at a time, even with extra clothing, although in the month of June, and the weather excessively hot. The ice remains until very late in the season, and is often drawn up in the months of June and July. Samuel Mathews drew from the well a large piece of ice on the 25th day of July, 1837, and it is common to find it there on the 4th of July.

The well is situated in the highway, about one mile northwest of the village of Owego, in the town and county of Tioga. There is no other well on that table of land, nor within sixty or eighty rods, and none that presents the same phenomenon. In the excavation, no rock or slate was thrown up, and the water is never affected by freshets, and is what is usually denominated "hard," or limestone water. A lighted candle being let down, the flame became agitated and thrown in one direction at the depth of thirty feet, but was quite still, and soon extinguished at the bottom. Feathers, down, or any light substance, when thrown in, sink with a rapid and accelerated motion.

The above facts may be relied upon as entirely correct, and a solution of the mystery is respectfully requested, by

Your obedient servant,

D. O. MACOMBER.

Owego, Feb. 26th, 1839, N. lat. 42 deg. 10 min.

Remarks.—We wish it were in our power to solve this interesting and difficult problem.

At the depth of more than sixty feet, the water ought not to freeze at all, as it should have nearly the same temperature of that film of the earth's crust, which is at this place affected by atmospheric variations and solar influence, being of course not far from the medium temperature of the climate. Could we suppose that compressed gases, or a greatly compressed atmosphere were escaping from the water, or near it, this would indicate a source of cold; but as there is no such indication in the water, we cannot avail ourselves of this explanation, unless we were to suppose that the escape of compressed gas takes place deep in the earth, in the vicinity of the well and in proximity to the water that supplies it. Perhaps this view is countenanced by the blowing of the candle at the depth of thirty feet, blowing it to one side, thus indicating a jet of gas which might rise from the water as low as its source, and even if it were carbonic acid, it might not extinguish the candle, while descending, as the gas would be much diluted by

common air; and still in the progress of time, an accumulation of carbonic acid gas might take place at the surface of the water sufficient to extinguish a candle.

We would recommend that a bottle of water be let down, and by means of a string so affixed as to empty the water, and of course to collect the air both at the jet and at the surface of the water. It should then be examined by lime-water and by other well-known methods. As the water is impregnated with carbonate of lime, this appears to indicate a source from which the carbonic acid gas (if such it be) is derived, and it may be forced into cavities as it is extricated until it is condensed to such a degree as to escape from its prison, and in expanding it may possibly produce the requisite cold.

POETIC CLAPTRAPS.

SOME German poets are singularly fond of trying to pass themselves off as persons who ought to be shut up in deserts, and transported to desolate islands. Scattered through their books we encounter occasional mysterious allusions to certain dark incidents in their lives, much meeting the eye, and more being meant for the mind. Now this is disgusting affectation; it is a claptrap unworthy of intellectual men. Byron tried it, and got credit for sincerity from some half-dozen persons, of whom Goethe (poor old man!) was one. Yet Byron's was a wild life, and he *might* have done something to "plunge his years in fatal penitence." Where he failed to pass for worse than he could be, who is likely to succeed? With that silvery voice, those courtly manners, does Tieck stand any chance of being regarded as a villain at heart! Can a man, so brimful of the milk-and-water of human kindness as Kerner, have poisoned his mother-in-law, and set the Spree on fire? Who will believe that the delicate, lemon-hued *hand-shoe* of Klinger is assumed only to hide such an accusing stain as might "the multitudinous sea incarnadine?" These follies, however, are peculiar to a few. Our friend Wetzel does not pretend to be a very *mauvais sujet*—he has nothing to confess, he "sleeps in spite of thunder." He is, in fact, "more sinned against than sinning"—wretched only, not guilty; he weeps blood, but has drawn none—writes daggers, but never brandishes them. His characteristic fault is that of talking à la Jacob Boehmen—

"His thoughts are theorems—his words a problem,
As if he deem'd that mystery would ennoble 'em."

Tell us, for instance, who can, the meaning of the first two stanzas of this little piece:

LIVE.

O, this vast weight that stifles
The beatings of my breast!
This giant-thought that rifles
My stormy nights of rest!
O, swindled soul! that starvest
In Fancy's richest lands,
Must then thy golden harvest
By reap'd by robber-hands?

O, anguish! wordless anguish!
When space hath room for stars,
Why must the *Lion* languish
Behind his cage's bars?
FRESHER [Liberty] in sunbright letters
Is blazon'd on the sky,
And, bound in triple fetters,
I can but see, and sigh!

Yet, up! No dungeon narrows
The orbit of the soul!
Forth! Take thy bow and arrows,
And choose thy mark and goal!
No giants shalt thou slaughter,
As in the olden years;
Nor wade through fire and water,
To dry a virgin's tears.

Life now hath colder duties,
And man hath sterner toils,
Than freeing spell-bound beauties,
Or gathering knightly spoils:
Dark Earth is disenchant'd
By Want, and Thought, and Pain,
And nought is phantom-haunted
Except the poet's brain.

Crush Self, the necromancer!
Call Reason from the tomb,
Where Passion, worst entrancer,
Still holds her chain'd in gloom!
Sustain a drooping brother!
Ere action, understand!
Revere the Church, thy mother;
And love thy Fatherland!

Review of *Wetzel's Poems*, in the *Dublin University Magazine*.

INFANCY OF JAMES WATT.

A friend of the father of the improver of the steam-engine came upon young James, as he lay stretched upon the ground, tracing with chalk all sorts of cross lines. "Why do you suffer this child thus to trifle away his time?" exclaimed the visitor; "send him to school." "You will do well to delay your judgment," said the father; "before condemning him, be good enough to find out his occupation." The harsh judgment was speedily reversed—the child of six was solving a problem in geometry!

"James," said Mrs. Muirhead, one day, to her nephew, "I never saw any boy more given to trifling than you are: can't you take a book, and employ yourself usefully? There you have been sitting a whole hour, without speaking a single word. Do you know what you have been about all this time? You have done nothing but shut and open, and open and shut, the lid of the tea-kettle; and first you have put the saucer in the steam from the spout, and then you have held the silver teaspoon in it; and then you have done nothing but pore over them, and bring together the drops formed by condensation, on the surface of the china or the clear spoon. Am't you ashamed of spending your time in that way?"

M. Arago, quoted in the Athenæum.

CURIOSITY A HOPEFUL SYMPTOM.

To be without curiosity, is nothing less than to be a confirmed hopeless dunce. There is a story told of Dr. Johnson, that, as he was once on the Thames, engaged with a friend in discussing some point of fabulous history, he turned round, in a fit of good-humoured caprice, to the young boy who happened to be rowing them, and asked him whether he could tell them anything about the Argonauts. "No," said the boy, "but I should like to know about them, if I could get anybody to teach me." This so delighted our good sage that he added a sixpence to the boy's fare, with many words of encouragement, and kind looks into the bargain. The man of morals and of letters proved himself here to be something more and higher—a man of sound, practical, and gentle-hearted wisdom.—*Self-Formation.*

THE DOCTOR AND THE PAVIOR.

Dr. Radcliffe had a great objection to paying his bills. A pavior, after long and fruitless attempts to get his account settled, caught the Doctor just getting out of his chariot, at his own door, in Bloomsbury-square, and demanded the liquidation of his debt. "Why, you rascal," said the Doctor, "do you pretend to be paid for such a piece of work? Why, you have spoiled my pavement, and then covered it over with earth to hide your bad work!" "Doctor," said the pavior, "mine is not the only bad work that the earth hides!" "You dog, you," said Radcliffe, "are you a wit? You must be poor: come in, and you shall be paid."—*Physic and Physicians.*

EPITAPH BY A WIDOW ON HER HUSBAND.

Thou wast too good to live on earth with me,
And I, not good enough to die with thee.

ANECDOTE OF DR. YOUNG.

Dr. Cotton, who was intimate with him, paid him a visit about a fortnight before his last illness. The old man was then in perfect health: the antiquity of his person, the gravity of his utterance, and the earnestness which which he discoursed about religion, gave him, in the Doctor's eye, the appearance of a prophet. They had been delivering their sentiments upon this book of Newton (his *Treatise on the Prophecies*), when Young closed the conference thus:—"My friend, there are two considerations upon which my faith in Christ is built as upon a rock: the fall of man, the redemption of man, and the resurrection of man, the three cardinal articles of our religion, are such as human ingenuity never could have invented; therefore they must be divine. The other argument is this: If the prophecies have been fulfilled, of which there is abundant demonstration, the Scripture must be the Word of God; and if the Scripture be the Word of God, Christianity must be true."—*Cowper's Letters.*

FRIENDSHIP.

Friendship is one of the fairest productions of the human soil, the cordial of life, the lenitive of our sorrows, and the multiplier of our joys; the source equally of animation and of repose. He who is destitute of this blessing, amidst the greatest crowd and pressure of society, is doomed to solitude, and however surrounded by flatterers and admirers, however armed with power and rich in the endowments of nature and of fortune, has no resting-place. The most elevated station in life affords no exemption from those agitations and disquietudes, which can only be laid to rest on the bosom of a friend.—*Robert Hall.*

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